T H E S I S

ON

"THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH MALVERN DISTRICT, CANTERBURY, 1850-1900."

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Presented for M.A. and Honours.

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C O N T E N T S.

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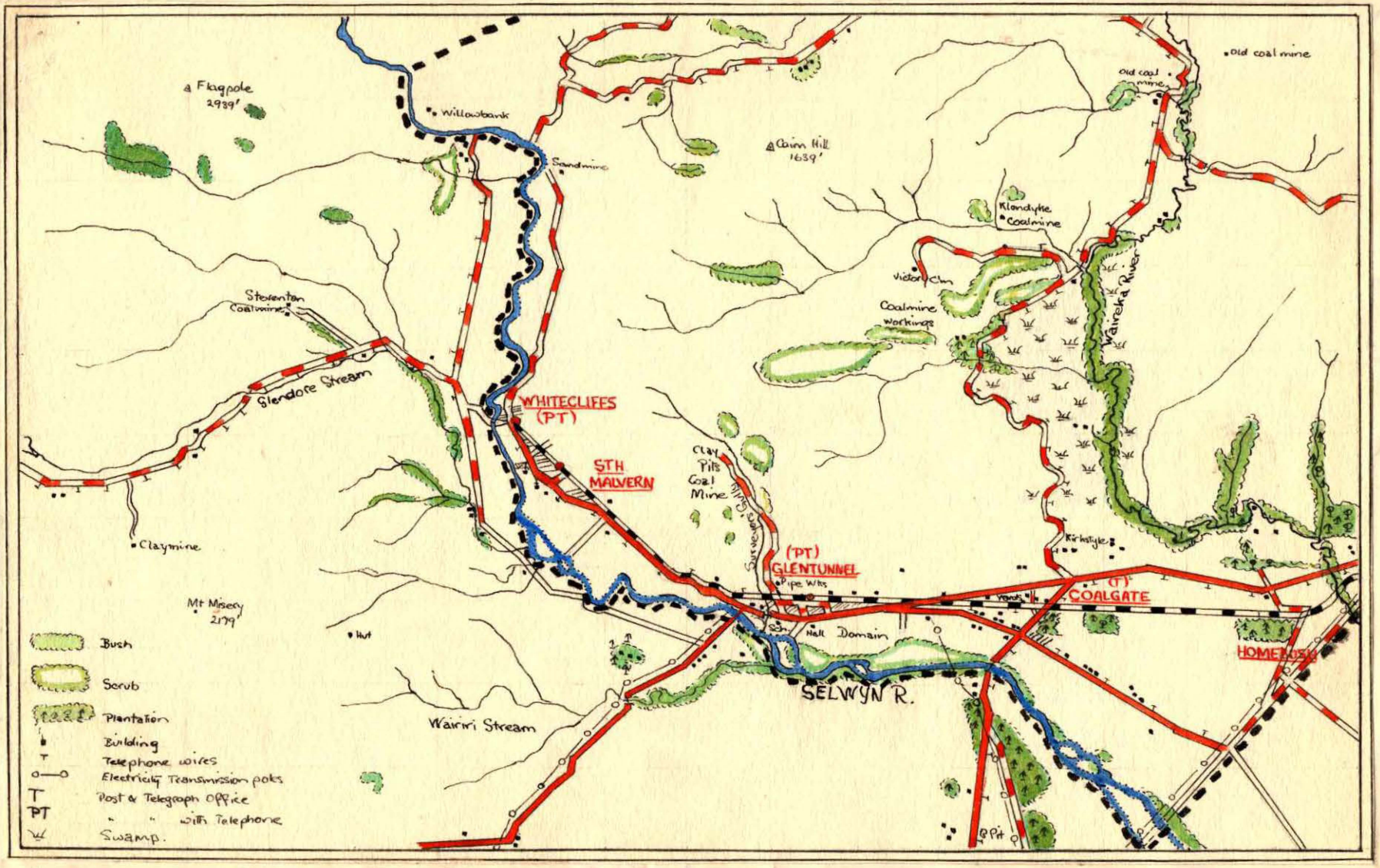
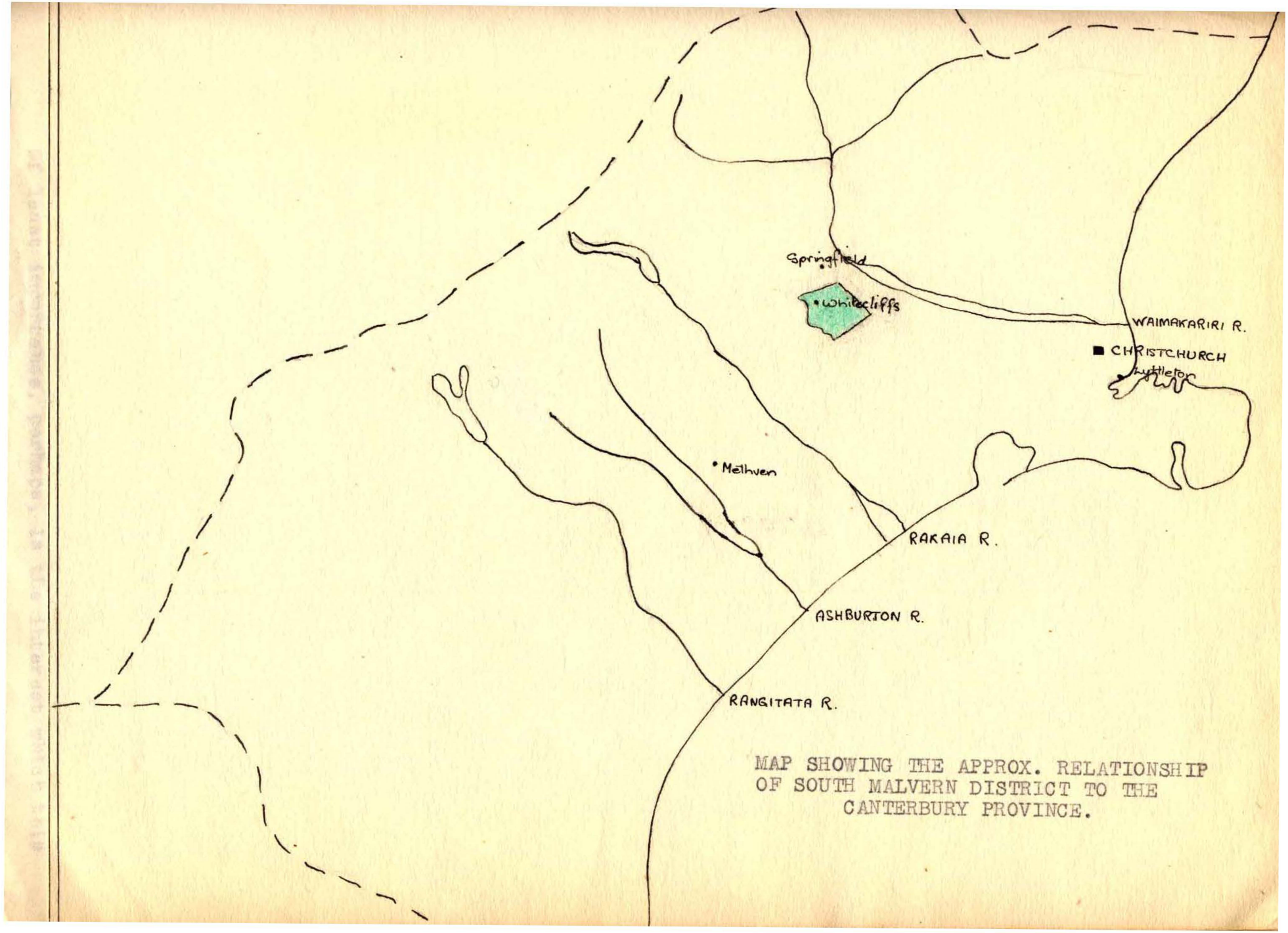
ILLUSTRATIONS & MAPS.



MAP SHOWING TOWNSHIPS OF SOUTH MALVERN DISTRICT.

SCALE 1 inch = 1 mile

- - - - = Boundary of South Malvern Road District



MAP SHOWING THE APPROX. RELATIONSHIP OF SOUTH MALVERN DISTRICT TO THE CANTERBURY PROVINCE.

PREFACE.

"The lines of the ranges I follow
I travel the hills with my eyes
For I know where they make a deep hollow
A valley of grass and the rise
Of streams clearer than glass." 1

So wrote Frederick Broome when he left his sheep-run at "Broomielaw", now called "Steventon", to seek a new life in Australia. To those low hills, dominated by "Flagpole" and by the mountain ranges beyond, and to that "valley of grass" through which the Selwyn River winds its sprawling way towards the open plains, my own thoughts went back for the subject of this thesis. When Broome knew it the Selwyn valley was most probably a wide sea of tussock and flax, with an occasional cabbage-tree as lonely sentinel. The only habitation, then, consisted in the homesteads of three early Canterbury runs -- those of Homebush, Steventon, and Malvern Hills.

The district has changed much since then. It is still small, however, and relatively unimportant. In some places gorse and broom have replaced the tussocks and flax of long ago, and in recent years, have closed in like an invading host on the small townships of Whitecliffs, South Malvern, Glentunnel and Coalgate which, close to the railway line, comprise the South Malvern district. None of these is important, and their names would scarcely be known outside the Canterbury province. Coal-mining and clay-working, with a little timber-milling, are the only important secondary industries and farming is on a limited scale. It is a district without perhaps a promising

1 Barker, "Station Life in New Zealand", p.236.

future but certainly with a fascinating and interesting past. It is the past with which this study is mainly concerned.

First of all the district has an inseparable link with well-known pioneer families. The Homebush estate, greatly reduced, has known four generations since William and John Deans first obtained it in 1851, so that the Deans family has been closely connected with the district's history for about 100 years. Again, the homestead from which Lady Barker wrote her delightful, if over-coloured, accounts of early station life, still stands, in part at least, in the hills about two miles from Whitecliffs, and is now owned by G. B. Starkey. Across the Selwyn from the same township, and up the valley of a small tributary, is the old orchard which used to surround the home of some of the sons of Bishop Harper, Malvern Hills station.

These names represent the golden age of run-holding in Canterbury, and gave to the small district a good beginning. This leisured period gave way in the '70's to the urgency and rush of getting a railway line and adequate roads through to the "black diamonds" -- newly opened coal mines in the district. Canterbury was hungry for coal in the late '60's and early '70's and New South Wales coal cost about £6 a ton. Therefore the tremendous interest aroused and investigation carried out into the extent of coal deposits and other mineral wealth in the Malvern Hills gave colour and enthusiasm to South Malvern's early history. An exaggerated idea of the amount of coal available gave to the whole Malvern Hills area considerable importance for progressive Canterbury settlers.

Of least importance, perhaps, is the interest which this

district has for one of its sons who spent all of boyhood and early manhood within its borders and whose mind goes back with sincere affection to the same river valley and ranges which Broome loved in his brief stay at "Steventon".

To write an historical record of such a district has, however, been a task with many difficulties. First, there is the difficulty of exact geographical boundaries. Rivers and roads and surveyors' pegs may provide exact boundaries for maps, but they are no boundaries at all to a strong community spirit. The people who owned the farms and worked the mines across the river Selwyn from Whitecliffs, and on its south bank, were always part of South Malvern district in the community sense, even when they crossed the river in drays or on horseback. Therefore, in most cases, and as far as records have been available, they have been included in this history. Another difficulty, somewhat related to the former, must often be encountered in any historical survey of Canterbury country districts in the early years. At a time when there were no railway stations, or post offices, or even perhaps houses or hotels for landmarks, it appears that a general name was often used for a widely scattered area. This is particularly true of "Malvern". The term was used in the '60's for the whole area from where Russells Flat now is to the Selwyn Gorge. It was used also for both the townships which later became South Malvern and Sheffield respectively. Such is equally the case with "Selwyn". Used as a rule to denote the southern section of the river and the surrounding district, it was also used for Coalgate under the name "Selwyn Bluff", and the whole of the upper reaches of the

Selwyn were called "Upper Selwyn". Therefore a map reference "Selwyn River, near coal" could have referred to at least three different places.

A limited amount of material for research has been found available, and in widely scattered sources. This adds to the difficulty of documenting the historical account, and also to that of finding sufficient accurate detail to make the record interesting. How much more fruitful such research would be if minutes of meetings of school committees, church organisations and local bodies were accurately and more fully recorded and the minute-books themselves were also jealously safeguarded.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty of all is that of interpreting the spirit of a period that is past. Many early residents have died, and there is little trace of them in records available. Facts alone, even if they are accurate, do not make history. They are but the bones of a skeleton which will "come alive" by the spirit of the women who worked in the farmhouses and the men who made the roads, cut out the coal, worked in the brick-kilns or tilled the soil. Their work and their lives made the South Malvern district as much as the more illustrious names of the early pioneers. It is to be regretted that they are so much harder to trace, and therefore, perhaps, some of them are not mentioned in this survey.

The coal from South Malvern pits burned slowly with a clear flame and then equally slowly died away to red embers and to white ash. The history of the district is much the same. There was a time when the flame burned clearly, when Christchurch people

urged the need to open up the district because of its coal, when a railway was pushed through speedily, and when new townships forged ahead in the prospect of increasing mineral wealth. That time has passed. The flame was at its brightest in the later years of last century and the early years of this. Writing the story of the district now is much like watching a fire which still has a red glow, but of which the flame has died. Nor is it easy to discover, or imagine, what the flame was really like.

In the earlier chapters the principal sources used have been Lady Barker's two journals written at "Steventon" -- "Station Life in New Zealand" and "Station Amusements in New Zealand", also "Pioneers of Canterbury", being the Deans letters 1840-1854 edited by John Deans, and "A First Year in Canterbury Settlement" by Samuel Butler, an occasional visitor to Malvern Hills. For the history of coal-mining the geological reports of Julius von Haast, James Hector and F. W. Hutton, the mining handbooks of 1887 and 1906, and the Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives have been mainly used. Records of road-making and railway construction were found in the minute books of the South Malvern Road Board and the Journals of the Proceedings of the Canterbury Provincial Council, while for the later history of the district the minute books of Glentunnel school and domain board, Selwyn County Council and other local bodies have been used where possible.

Acknowledgment is made of help given in the preparation of this work by John Deans, Riccarton, James Deans, Homebush, and

David McMillan, Darfield, by L. A. Marshall, W. J. Teale, W. J. Smith, Glentunnel, P. Prestidge, Coalgate, and G. Popple, Darfield, through the use of minute books and other records, and also by other local residents.

Thanks are recorded to James Deans, S. J. Watson and Miss J. Barlow for the use of photographs.

GLENTUNNEL TOWNSHIP from the air. Selwyn R. Upper L. Surveyors' Gully Upper R. Photo: V. Browne.

INTRODUCTION.

The district of South Malvern did not begin its existence in a legal and technical sense till the early '70's. On December 11th 1872 it was moved in the Canterbury Provincial Council that "that portion of the Malvern road board district named in a petition of owners and occupiers of the same addressed to His Honour the Superintendent and forwarded by His Honour to this Council for consideration be constituted a separate road district to be called South Malvern district."[1] The first meeting of ratepayers of the district, however, had been held some time before, on May 25th, 1871, when M. B. Hart was in the chair, and other members of the Committee were James McIlraith, N. Grindrod, R. P. Pole, Kenneth Wilson, and James Manson.[2] It was as a result of the efforts of these men that the new road board district was formed.

The present record, however, concerns the people who lived and worked within those boundaries from 1850-1900 and also those who, closely contiguous to this area, found with the people of the district a community spirit and a common life.

Nowadays, from the township of Darfield, and the main West Coast route, the Darfield-Arundel highway branches off to take a more south westerly direction towards the hills. If this route is followed for about five miles the familiar land mark of the Deans' brick wool shed will be seen just to the right of the road at Homebush, and further back, sheltered by magnificient plantations against the low-lying hills, the homestead of the Homebush

1. Journal Proceedings of Canterbury Provincial Council, Sess. XXXVIII, 11 December 1872.
2. South Malvern Road Board, minutes, 25May, 1871.

estate. Later, two miles farther on, when Coalgate is reached, there appears on the south bank of the Selwyn River a long line of hills, which because of its abrupt rise, almost from the bed of the river itself, has been called the Bluff Hill. Between these two hill formations -- that behind James Deans' Homebush estate and that named Bluff Hill, both of which in the early days were designated, with some confusion, by the general title of Malvern Hills -- there is a valley through which the Selwyn River flows, and which shelters the townships of Coalgate, Glentunnel, South Malvern and Whitecliffs. With the early history of this valley, the growth and development of these small townships and the mineral wealth of the surrounding hills this record will be mainly concerned.

The earliest traces of occupation concern the Maoris, but it is doubtful if they ever occupied the district, or even parts of it, for any length of time. Relics of Maori occupation have been found in the district in many places. Members of the Kenneth Wilson family, who lived in a sod house in the Selwyn River, can remember finding Maori ovens in the riverbed and also watching Maori parties going upstream on eeling expeditions during the summer months. On the property of C. L. Derrett, of Coalgate, remains have been found which may indicate the existence of a Maori pah in earlier times. Maori relics were also discovered by W. Watson, of Coalgate, in a cave above the Selwyn riverbed, and in recent years, when preparing a garden almost in the centre of Whitecliffs, L. D. King uncovered huge beds of stones which were almost certainly old Maori ovens. It seems most likely that the parties of Maoris came up from the Lake Ellesmere district

and camped in the higher reaches of the Selwyn during the summer when the river was low and eels were more easily caught. Any permanent occupation of the area by the Maori people took place long before white settlers came and exact dates concerning such occupation are not available.[1]

The Physical Setting. It is necessary to consider some of the physical features of the valley to which the early run-holders came. Perhaps the most important is the Selwyn River, of which an accurate and interesting description is given by Julius von Haast.[2] Its principal sources are situated on the eastern slopes of the Thirteen Mile bush, where the Wakaepa, or Selwyn, as it is now called, rises, and after flowing through a long succession of very rugged but picturesque gorges in the Malvern Hills from which it receives further tributaries, it eventually reaches the open valley. Here it becomes much wider and flows more slowly along the shingle depression between the Waimakariri river and the Rakaia, till it empties itself into Lake Ellesmere. The most northerly branch of the river, the Hawkins, or Pauri, as it was then called, rises in the Russell's Flat area of the Malvern Hills and flows on the northern side of these hills through Hawkins and Greendale to the Selwyn. For the greater part of the year, however, it is now merely a shingly, gorse-covered bed and only after exceptionally heavy rain does it ever reach the main stream of the Selwyn river. Except for purposes of a preliminary survey it lies outside the scope of this study. Another stream, the Waireka, then called by the

1. "The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand" Volume III, p.748, 1903.
2. Von Haast, "Geology of Canterbury and Westland", p.219.

picturesque name Wai-aniwa-niwa, has its source in the saddle leading into the Selwyn near the site of Hart's coal mine, and drains a low, swampy area in the heart of the Malvern Hills, now called Bush Gully. It joins the Selwyn after flowing behind the homestead at Homebush, through the old Waireka estate to which it gave its name, and through Greendale.

The river Selwyn had a good reputation in Lady Barker's stay at Steventon and was rarely difficult to cross.[1] Only after heavy rain in the hills would the river present any difficulty, and quite frequently in the summer months it becomes a dry shingle bed below the Coalgate traffic bridge. However, a very early account of a trip up the Selwyn Gorge indicates that it could be dangerous when rising rapidly, especially when the journey up those narrow gorges required that the river be crossed many times.[2]

Another Maori name besides Wakaepa which was thenfrequently used for the main stream was Waikirikiri.[3] However, Samuel Butler in writing of a visit to Malvern Hills station tells of the necessity of crossing the "Waikitty, as it is generally called".[4] This means, probably, that Butler, as a comparatively recent settler, was as yet unfamiliar with Maori words.

Apart from the river itself the early runholders saw very little of interest in their surroundings. Speaking of the same trip up to the Selwyn Valley, Butler says disgustedly "There is nothing of interest on the track."[5] "The low volcanic mountains"

1. Barker, "Station Life", Page 83.
2. Ibid Page 80.
3. Ibid Page 83.
4. Butler, "A First Year in Canterbury Settlement" Page 48.
5. Ibid P.48.

as he described the Malvern Hills, would have been covered with the native manuka and with clumps of matagouri (discaria toumata) and in other open places by grey tussocks, familiar sight to all early settlers. Extensive areas of swamp, a feature of the Canterbury foothills,[1] existed in Surveyors' Gully, Wairiri Valley and Bush Gully. The latter place was probably extensively wooded at one time, as Flagpole had also been with totara bush, at a still earlier date.[2] In such places, if the water were deep, raupo (varieties of typha augustifolia) would be found, and everywhere there was plenty of flax (phormium tenax) and niggerhead (carex secta). The stately tufted head of the toi toi (arundo conspicua) would also be seen in the swamps and riverbeds. In the flat open area of the Selwyn Valley itself nothing existed but the wide sea of inevitable tussocks and patches of flax on the lower levels near the river. Early settlers spoke occasionally of 'old man tussocks'. Burning and cultivation and the presence of stock have ended the existence of these, and it is difficult now to imagine what they were like. But after a few years at Steventon Lady Barker sighed for the "good old times of a dozen years ago when the tussocks were six feet high."[3] This may seem at first some exaggeration but at least they were sufficiently high to allow a shepherd to sleep literally "in the tussocks" with the tallest of them tied across his body for protection from cold night winds.

As regards the smaller plants of the valley, Butler did not waste much time on them, commenting that they were "few and decid-

1. Speight, Wall and Laing, "Natural History of Canterbury" p.119
2. Barker, "Station Life" p. 219.
3. Ibid, p. 196.

edly ugly."[1] However, he wisely took particular notice of "one beast of a plant they call spear-grass, or Spaniard."[2] This plant, probably fairly common at that time, was yellowish in colour with long, hard, sword-like leaves surrounding a tall prickly flower. The Spaniards grew, apparently, in clusters, or patches, among the tussocks,[3] a most unpleasant feature of the vegetation of the area, and a menace to anyone walking, or to a horse's heels.

Another plant which occurred then, as now, in parts of the Malvern Hills was "tutu," highly nutritious to cattle on a full stomach but fatal on an empty one. It is a refreshing green colour and its first early shoots have been compared with asparagus.[4] The effect on cattle is that "tutu" produces a raging thirst, and the maddened beast will rush to the nearest water, and quite frequently will die at the water's edge.

Nothing, however, impressed the early settlers so much as the utter "treelessness"[5] of the plains. It is difficult to imagine the Selwyn Valley, which now has so many delightful willows along the river bed and deciduous and evergreen trees in private properties and public domains, without a single tree except the occasional forlorn cabbage tree. Yet such it was. Samuel Butler's description, hasty in its valuation but picturesque in its choice of words, seems fitting, "They (the plains) are in clear weather monotonous and dazzling; in cloudy weather monotonous and sad; and they have little to recommend them but the facility they

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1. Butler, op. cit., Page 48.
2. Ibid, p. 48.
3. Barker, "Station Amusements in New Zealand," p. 35.
4. Butler, op. cit. pp. 88-89.
5. Barker, "Station Life," p. 25.

afford for travelling and the grass which grows upon them."[1]

However, in spite of the complete absence of wooded country, except further back in the ranges, the pioneers found that the country was already inhabited by many different kinds of birds.[2] Very soon after the settlers arrived, the quail, rails and plover which had peopled the plains and foothills became scarce. The pukeko, however, a member of the rail family, remained, though in greatly reduced numbers, and is still seen occasionally to-day. But the birds which held their own in great numbers were the wekas. Their inquisitive habits made them frequently noticed by Lady Barker, and at times the shrill cry of this bird was the only sound which woke the stillness of the valley.[3] The wekas were often seen by the early residents in such places as Surveyors' Gully and even in a flax-covered area on which the "Homebush" brick-yards now stand. It has been suggested that the 1918 snowstorm killed many of these birds,[4] certainly they were never numerous in this district in recent years. Both tuis and bellbirds were seen in a few small patches of bush, and the black and the pied fantail.

There was also the native lark -- in most respects exactly like the English lark except that it had two small white feathers in the tail, that it did not soar, and commenced its flight with a short 'chirrup' note instead of a song.[5]

Weather Conditions: Of all the climatic dangers which the settlers learned to fear in the new country the worst was from "our enemy, the nor-wester."[6] Soon every new immigrant heard of its

1. Butler, op. cit. p. 45.
2. Speight, Wall and Laing, op. cit., p. 204.
3. Barker, "Station Life," p. 81.
4. Speight, Wall and Laing, op. cit., p. 206.
5. Butler, op. cit. p. 117.
6. Barker, "Station Life," p. 63.

terrors by word of mouth and it was not long before he saw the wind sweeping across the plains himself. In the dry river beds he would face long blinding sheets of whirling, cutting sand and tiny pebbles; out on the open plains a dry parching wind, which sometimes lasted for days and blew in continual clouds of dust, would sweep all before it. No shelter of tall and friendly pine trees broke the force of the blast, there were not even fences to give temporary refuge from its fury. When the house for the Steventon run was being built in Christchurch Lady Barker told her builder that she "feared that a strong nor-wester would blow the whole affair away,"[1] since she had heard that this wind was particularly strong in the Malvern Hills. 'Nor-westers will occasionally occur in mid winter, but are most common in spring, especially in the months of September and October, and in the summer, when they may continue in greater or less violence "for a fortnight together"[2]. The other most common prevailing wind, described to Lady Barker as the "southerly buster",[3] sweeps down through the Rakaia Gorge, is seldom as boisterous as the nor-wester, but is usually very much colder, and is frequently followed by rain, or in winter months, by snow. Winds from an easterly quarter are also followed at times by light, drizzling rain. In spite of these factors the rainfall in the district is light to moderate, (though much heavier than on the open plains), about 30-35 inches of rain falling annually.[4] Frosts occur frequently in winter months, as high as from 15-20 degrees, but

1. Ibid. P. 49.
2. Butter, op.cit., P.111.
3. Barker, "Station Life", p.49.
4. Records of James Deans, Homebush.

are usually followed by clear, sunny days. The winter months are no doubt very much less severe now than in the pioneer days, rather because of the growth of splendid shelter belts than because of great changes in the climatic conditions.

Such was the district, still unnamed, in which the Deans brothers took up their Homebush run in 1851 -- an area exposed to wind, but well watered by the Selwyn and by a sufficient rainfall, and of moderate fertility, whose low manuka covered hills were later to provide intense interest for the geologist and the miner when these became at length aware of the treasure which lay hidden in the Malvern Hills.

THE HOMESTEAD AT HOMEBUSH IN LATE '50's.

Photo by courtesy James Deans.

CHAPTER I.

"THE EARLY YEARS OF RUNHOLDING" -- 1850-1870.

Such surroundings -- a wide sea of tussock on the flat land, driven in billowing waves before the 'nor-wester', clumps of flax on the terraces near the river, and manuka and scrub-covered hills-- greeted the early settlers. William and John Deans, the first men to take up land in the district, had already been in Canterbury for five years when the four ships came, and their home at Riccarton, as that of the Hays at Pigeon Bay, with whom the Deans brothers had travelled south from Wellington, was well established with a splendid garden and an orchard. The brothers had already done much for early Canterbury. In 1843 the first sheep had been introduced by them.[1] Lovers of trees and gardens, they early imported considerable quantities of seed for orchards and plantations in Canterbury.[2] As early as 1845 they introduced apples, when John Deans brought a variety known as the Leather Coat or Common Russet from Nelson.[3] The river up which their supplies were brought and the farm which they had carved out for themselves were called Avon and Riccarton respectively, at their request,[4] because New Zealand members of the Deans family were descended from John Deans of Kirkstyle, in the parish of Riccarton near Kilmarnock, Scotland,[5] and the Avon was a stream in their native Lanarkshire on which the brothers had played as boys. In 1848 the Deans brothers were firmly established, though many

1. Speight, Watt and Lang, op.cit., P.273.
2. Deans, "Pioneers of Canterbury", p.167.
3. Bruce, "The Early Days of Canterbury", p.50.
4. Deans, op.cit., P.137.
5. Ibid, P.10.

hardships had been overcome for the limited prosperity they had secured.

With the arrival of a large number of colonists they were quickly in trouble with J. R. Godley, the leader of the Canterbury Association. It has been suggested that difficulties arose because of Godley's zeal and determination to secure as much land as possible in the new settlement for members of the Anglican church -- a policy which would bring him into conflict at once with the Deans brothers and the Hays of Banks Peninsula, both staunch Presbyterian families. This may certainly have been a contributing factor to the friction that ensued. But it is equally certain that Godley believed, or used as an excuse for his attitude, that the Deans' agreement with the Maoris, which had been confirmed by the government, did not rest on a legal basis, and in this he was supported by the Canterbury Association.[1]

However, some time before the crisis actually came with Godley and the Canterbury Association the Deans Brothers had foreseen the value and possibilities of a hill station for their sheep and cattle.[2] There were a number of sound reasons for this. With river boundaries the sheep would be more easily looked after at a time when there were so few fences, and there would be no intermingling of flocks. Further, at certain times of the year, the harder grass on the foothills was better for fattening sheep and cattle than the soft grass around Riccarton.

Because of the prospect that their own settlement would be speedily chosen for sections for the Canterbury Association settlers

1. Ibid, P.198.
2. Ibid, P.135.

the Deans brothers addressed a memorial to William Fox, the New Zealand Company's acting principal agent, who had succeeded Colonel Wakefield, with the object of coming to some arrangement regarding a new run outside the intended borders of the Canterbury Association.[1] But there was a long controversy and a very difficult period ahead before the Homebush run was occupied. It was necessary, eventually, for them to dispose of their Dalethorpe run and the sheep it was then carrying in order to provide the funds necessary to defend their claim at law.[2] A memorial was presented to Governor Grey outlining the brothers' grievances,[3] and a letter, dated March 24th 1851, which was presented to Godley, set out the grounds upon which they considered themselves entitled to a pastoral run in compensation for the land near Christchurch which was then being taken up by the purchasers of the Canterbury Association.[4]

Thus, in October 1851, the new run at Homebush was occupied. It then consisted of 30,000 acres and stretched from the Waimakariri River to the Selwyn.[5] This run was easily accessible across the flat plains, and included the nearest extensive area of hill country to the town of Christchurch.

It was proposed that the station should be used at first primarily for cattle, as such cattle stations were considered very good business at that time.

In the meantime, while asserting their right to a run in compensation for the loss of land at Riccarton, the Deans brothers

1. Ibid. P.154.
2. Bruce, op.cit. P.17.
3. Deans, op.cit. P.181.
4. Ibid. P.183.
5. Acland, "Early Canterbury Runs", P.20.

had not been idle. On June 26th 1850, John Deans shipped from Newcastle in Australia 8 Durham bulls, 162 heifers, 12 mares, 600 maiden ewes and 11 first-class rams.[1] Previous visits to Australia for the purpose of buying stock had been made in 1843 and 1847.[2] These cattle and sheep became the foundation of the very fine flocks and herds for which Homebush was well-known in the early days. It is thought that the name Homebush was given to the run after the name of the stockyards outside Sydney at which some of the stock were bought.

Neither of the Deans brothers lived at Homebush. William Deans lost his life in the tragic wreck of the "Maria," on his return from Australia in 1851.[3] In October of the same year John Deans, in writing to Scotland, says, "All the breeding cattle will be sent up to the hill-station in a week or two,"[4] which was just before he left for Scotland, where he married Jane McIlraith. In those days the present Homebush section of the run was used for cattle, while that part on the northern aspect of the Malvern Hills, soon to be called "Morven," was used for sheep. It is possible that a confusion over this name may have been the reason for calling Sheffield township Malvern in the late '60's, though it cannot be established with certainty.

Early Canterbury run-holders frequently held large areas of land. For instance, Homebush comprised 33,400 acres, Malvern Hills 10,000 acres[5] and Steventon 9,700 acres.[6] The main reason for this was that in the days when no water-race system irrigated

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1. Deans, op. cit. p. 157.
2. Speight, Wall & Laing, op. cit., p. 274-5.
3. Deans, op. cit. p. 212.
4. Ibid, p. 215.
5. Acland, op. cit. p. 64.
6. Ibid, p. 201.

the wide stretches of the plain it was essential that a sheep or cattle run should have a river frontage. Rivers helped, also, to provide useful boundaries on the otherwise trackless and unfenced areas of the plains. At the same time it was desirable to obtain some shelter for the stock from wind and storms -- even the limited amount of shelter afforded by the low-lying hills. These large pastoral runs were not cut up to any great extent till after the '70's, when water-race systems began slowly to creep across the plains from the Kowhai, Waikamariri and Selwyn rivers.

There were equally important considerations in the choice of a site for the homestead. All homesteads at Malvern Hills, Steventon, and Homebush, were found nestling close to the lowlying hills for shelter from prevailing winds and beside a tributary of the Selwyn river for adequate water supply. Fuel was also very scarce, and very expensive.[1] Therefore it was important that the homestead should be built near, if possible, to supplies of wood, for building stock pens and sheep yards, as well as for household fuel. However there was no bush on the Steventon run,[2] and since coal was not mined in any quantity till the late 60's the early settlers had to manage entirely on wood and obtain it wherever possible. Lady Barker gives an account of two bush men who, clad in picturesque Colonial style with red flannel shirts, moleskin trousers, diggers' plush hats and Cookham boots, were cutting down trees, possibly on the hills at the back of the Rockwood estate, for her husband's use at Steventon.[3]

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1. Barker, "Station Life," p. 62.
2. Ibid, page 62.
3. Barker, "Station Amusements," p. 15.

On the foothills, however, manuka scrub provided some solution to the problem of fuel shortage, but further down the valley and out on the plains the problem was a difficult one. Members of the Wilson family, living in their sod cottage in the Selwyn riverbed two or three miles below Coalgate, occasionally burned dung in their fires and searched the bed of the river for driftwood after a heavy flood.

Some other practical considerations which influenced the choice of the homestead site may be briefly considered. Above all it should be placed in as convenient a position as possible for the working of the sheep or cattle. Such was Butler's advice in writing back to England about the prospects of sheep farming in New Zealand. "The sheep are the real masters of the place, -- the run is theirs, not yours -- you cannot bear this in mind too diligently."[1] Another suggestion, quaint but practical, was made by Henry Tancred, the early owner of Malvern Hills, to "make your garden where the cabbage trees were thick, as cabbage trees only grow on good land." [2]

A very interesting and colourful figure who worked on the cattle station at Homebush in the early years was James Robinson Clough, sometimes known as "Jimmy Robinson." Never a resident owner, John Deans made occasional visits to Homebush, such as that mentioned in a latter dated 21st March, 1853, when he travelled up to the station in a dog-cart with William Rankin.[3] Soon after his return from Scotland, John Deans died in 1854, and his wife con-

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1. Butler, op. cit. p. 131.
2. Acland, op. cit. p. 65.
3. Deans, op. cit. p. 254.

trolled the destinies of Homebush for many years in the interests of her infant son John Deans II. During these years several managers looked after the cattle and sheep work, the first of whom was Clough, whose diary provides interesting sidelights to the hospitality of Homebush in the '50's. On April 23, 1852, he wrote "Two men came here with dray, going for coal, stopped here two nights,"[1] and on December 4, 1851, "Mr. Russell" (Watts Russell) "and Fendle" (Fendall, after whom Fendalton is named) "and three other men to look at the coal. We had ten this night."[2] In a trackless waste of tussocks and dry water-courses the so-called "Homebush track" soon became familiar to shepherds and travellers. Clough occasionally took refuge at Riccarton from the isolation of the hill station, and such a visit is recorded by Thomas Cass who said that Clough "has been down here, on the loose as usual, for a short spell."[3] About 1853 Clough left Homebush, but a report of a serious fire in 1871 gives a later account of him. "In a serious fire at Mount Hutt," the account read,[4] "Robinson Clough," commonly known as "Jimmy Robinson" had been "quite burned out" -- a great misfortune to an "old identity" in comparison with whom the "pilgrims" are "new chums." Abner's Head, a tall peak in the Malvern Hills behind Sheffield, was named after a son of Robinson Clough.

In 1853 it appears that William Rankin assisted in managing the cattle station at Homebush, well aware of his lack of experience and need of advice and assistance for the task.[5] A

1. Ibid p. 292 (Appendix)
2. Ibid p. 289 (Appendix)
3. Ibid p. 221
4. "The Press" February 1, 1871.
5. Deans, op. cit. p. 263.

year later John Deans, in a letter to Scotland, refers to a seven-year arrangement to manage Homebush, no doubt with John Cordy -- "a respectable man with a large family," who had been a farmer in England.[1] Cordy did not stay the full period, however, though he managed Homebush on shares till 1859.[2]

After the death of William Deans his share of the run was managed in the interests of his brother James Deans, of Scotland, by Hugh and James McIlraith. In 1859 James McIlraith, who arrived in New Zealand in 1856, took over the mamagement of Homebush from John Cordy. This was an important occasion for the run which at this time was well stocked with cattle but comprised only about twenty acres of freehold property. McIlraith kept adding to the freehold area of the run and did much to enhance the beauty of Homebush by planting trees from many different countries. Under his regency stables and other farm buildings were erected of bricks and somewhat later a large commodious woolshed. McIlraith did not leave Homebush till 1894. Not only the Homebush estate but the whole district owes much to him, for no one took a more leading part in its development than "Jemmy" McIlraith, as he was familiarly called. He was prominent in the discovery of coal and with others in bringing it before the notice of the Canterbury public. When Julius von Haast carried out geological surveys in the Malvern Hills in 1871 and investigated the large seams of coal in Surveyors Gully he was assisted by McIlraith. Thoroughly Scottish in speech and outlook, interested in the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in the district, with a reputation for rectitude and honesty

1. Ibid, p. 270.
2. Acland, op. cit. p. 22.

he was known, nevertheless, at times for a characteristic hastiness and irritability of temper. But to this man, who became chairman of several local bodies in their earliest years including the Glentunnel School Committee and the South Malvern Road Board, the district owes as much as to any other man.

The Steventon station, taken up in September 1852, just a little later than the Dean's run, lies on the south bank of the Selwyn River "at the head of a sunny and sheltered valley."[1] Steventon was held first by Arthur Charles and Richard C. Knight, the latter of whom bought out his brother soon afterwards. The brothers were nephews of Jane Austen and named the run after a far more sheltered vicarage in Hampshire in which their aunt was brought up.[2] Two of his cadets, Henry Phillip Hill and Frederick Napier Broome, bought Steventon, with 80 acres of freehold property, from Knight in Feb. 1866. After Broome's marriage to Lady Barker the homestead was rebuilt, and for the rest of their stay in Canterbury the property was called Broomielaw, probably after Broome's name. It is of this run that such a colourful account exists in Lady Barker's two books. Heavy financial losses after the snowstorm of 1867 ruined Broome and he left for Western Australia soon afterwards, where he later became quite a famous figure.

Distances, Difficulties and Communication. From Lady Barker's accounts it is interesting, but not always easy, to piece together a record of events in the Selwyn Valley in those days. The Waireka station was a distance of 12 miles away[3] and it was

1. Barker, "Station Amusements", Page 2.
2. Acland, op.cit. Page 201.
3. Barker, "Station Life", P.83.

possible to ride twenty miles on horseback to catch the 9.30 a.m. train from Rolleston to Christchurch.[1] A railway line as far as Rolleston had been opened on Oct. 13th, 1866. The coal used at Broomielaw was "found 12 miles from this; it is not very good being only what is called lignite."[2] This undoubtedly came from Jebson's mine, called the Canterbury Colliery, situated in the hills behind the township of Sheffield and opened in the early '60's. Neither Harts' Pits nor the Homebush Colliery were open at this date, nor the numerous other little mines which later were opened in the hills around the Selwyn Valley. Little did Lady Barker realise that there were thousands of tons of the same lignite hidden below the surface on her husband's run, for the 'Steventon' mine worked in the early '70's and then abandoned has been re-opened and worked with considerable success in recent years by the Robb brothers, of Whitecliffs.

In writing of her mail arrangements to friends in England Lady Barker asks,"Have I ever told you that our post office is ten miles off, with an atrocious road between us and it?"[3] It seems almost certain that this "atrocious road" led over the "Big Saddle" to Russell's Flat or Annat, for at this time there was regular transport to the West Coast, where gold digging had begun.[4]

The location of the "nest of cockatoos", for whom Lady Barker showed considerable interest in seeking to promote educational advantages and religious services, is more easily established. It is almost certain to have been Hororata, where farming was

1. Ibid. Page 86.
2. Ibid. Page 61.
3. Ibid. P. 229.
4. Barker, "Station Amusements" P.88.

early established, and which had a school by 1870 and an Anglican Church soon afterwards, "Mrs. M....." , the lady with a spinning wheel in the corner of her room,[1] was a certain Mrs. Munro, known to Kenneth Wilson and family, of Coalgate. It is also possible that some of these 'cockatoos' from Hororata, and from Russell's Flat and Annat; were among those who came long distances to the religious services held in the homestead at "Steventon", and stayed afterwards to share in the tremendous meals provided. Both the meals, as well as the service, no doubt, attracted the visitors, but it is certain that religion gave to many of the pioneers a depth of moral character, a purposeful persistence in the face of hardship, and a breadthnof human sympathy which were quite remarkable.

Much of Steventon as it existed in those early days in the '60's still remains. A visitor may still look in at the oriel window and may imagine gaily dressed and slippered guests dancing on the wide and roomy verandah.[2] He may even imagine, in a convention that is strange to-day, the men of the party slipping away from the ladies to go to the gentlemen's swimming pool, the outline of which may still be seen to the left of the road down the valley. But most of all, perhaps, a visitor would recall the account of the snowstorm in 1867 when the drays had just left for town -- the shortage of food, the maids shutting themselves in their bedroom in order to "die warm", the cadet shovelling snow away to secure a few half-starved fowls for "food", and the final extremity, a tin of blacklead between the household and starvation

1. Barker, "Station Life", P.228.
2. Barker, "Station Amusements", P.208.

when the drays came back.[1] The whole incident has a mock heroic note but it must have been a terrifying experience.

Shepherds and Drivers. In such days when the farming work in the district was almost entirely pastoral the shepherd held a very important place. His work was arduous and his life often intensely lonely. The shepherd's hut was placed near the boundaries of the run and his only companions were his horse and the dogs. At times a small piece of ground around the hut was cultivated where vegetables, and perhaps gooseberries and black-currants, were grown. There was such a hut on the Steventon run, perhaps up the Selwyn Gorge which, with its walls papered with the "London Illustrated News," a new sheep skin mat on the floor, and the kettle on a crackling fire presented a picture of neatness and order.[2]

On the whole the shepherds seemed to have had a very good reputation. They were mainly Scottish -- "a fine class of men as a rule, most intelligent, and fond of reading."[3] Many years later in 1910, an observer stated that only Scotch shepherds rose to be runholders, because colonials preferred a more social life.[4]

In contrast to the quiet sober shepherd was the bullock-driver. Bullocks were frequently used for transport purposes, and a little later, when some agricultural work was done, bullock teams were used occasionally for ploughing, as at Homebush. The men who drove the bullock carts were regarded as a rowdier and rougher group than the shepherd, but they were often men of

1. Barker, "Station Life," p. 157-161.
2. Barker, "Station Amusements," p. 133.
3. Barker, "Station Life," p. 72.
4. "The Press," July 18, 1910, "Back Country Runs."

good character and education who had succumbed to the environment of a new and difficult life.[1] They had the opportunity, at least once or twice a year, when wool was carted to town, to seek relief in drinking bouts from the monotony of station life. It was a common saying then that "people only die from drowning and drunkenness."[2] At first bullocks were very scarce and high prices were paid for them. It was difficult to get one under £20, and even £30 was "no unusual price for a harness bullock."[3]

Bullock drays travelled about 15-20 miles a day, so that the journey to Christchurch would take two days, if the carts were heavily loaded. Such trips were made usually about twice a year when stores of all description were loaded for the return journey.[4]

Directly across the Selwyn Valley from South Malvern railway station, and up a fairly narrow gully, is the old orchard and the birch trees which surrounded the Malvern Hills station. This run comprised 10,000 acres and ran down to Selwyn Bluff, as it was then called, at Coalgate, and back towards Hororata. Sir Thomas Tancred and his brother John Tancred took the run in January 1852,[5] and some time later Charles Harper, a son of Bishop Harper, managed it, but was early succeeded by another brother, George Harper. He in turn took on a partnership with a third brother, Archdeacon Harper, who was then vicar of a very widely scattered parish, which included a number of the hill country runs known as Southern Stations,[6] While visiting these places he made

1. Barker, "Station Amusements," 1918-19.
2. Barker, "Station Life," p. 83.
3. Butler, op. cit. p. 81.
4. Barker, "Station Amusements," p. 93.
5. Acland, op. cit. p. 64.
6. Ibid, p. 65.

Malvern Hills station his headquarters.

Cadets. An interesting feature of the work on sheep runs was the training of cadets. These were quite often young men of considerable means, and sometimes with good academic records at English schools and universities who wished to learn sheep-farming, and, to that end, worked on a run in return for their food and "keep", at the same time picking up whatever smattering of knowledg they could.[1] Some proved quite unsuccessful and left their employment after a very short term.[2] However at Malvern Hills in the early days there were two cadets who afterwards made good in owning runs themselves -- G. A. E. Ross, later of Waireka, and J. B. Acland, of Mt. Somers.

Hardships. Hardship was a rule of life in that early period. It was accepted without much grumbling and gave to the men of those early stations a robust and vigorous hardihood. The only means of travel was by dray or on horseback, or else by walking, which many people did over long distances. The roads were tracks, ill-defined, dusty in summer, muddy in winter. Not until 1870, when Dr. Richards came to live at Hororata, was there a doctor nearer than Christchurch. Clough's diary gives an interesting picture of this difficulty, for on March 6th 1852 he records that "Mr. Tankard (very probably Tancred) broke his leg", and one of his men went to Christchurch for the doctor. Drs. Barker and Draper were both sent for, and eventually eight men arrived at Homebush to take the injured man away.[3] These were days of isolation for the few folk in the Selwyn Valley.

1. Butler, op.cit. P.69.
2. Ibid, P.49-50.
3. Deans, op.cit. P.291. (Appendix).

Meals were simple and they lacked variety. Mutton was the staple diet on all the runs with perhaps a change to beef for a special occasion like Christmas.[1] "Chops for breakfast; roast meat for dinner, cold meat for tea" was the regular menu. But sometimes there was very much less, as at Homebush in 1852, when Clough wrote in his diary "We have got nine potatoes in the house, that is all we have to eat."[2] Another real danger was that of being lost on the trackless plains, which had such a singular dearth of prominent features. Apparently Ross, then a cadet at Malvern Hills and later owner of Waireka, spent a night out in this way.[3] But all of these hardships were accepted by the pioneers with almost light-hearted courage.

The Year's Round: The work of the year on hill country stations was concerned with three main tasks. In late Autumn or Winter was the lambing season.[4] Not till after 1867, when nearly all the Steventon lambs were lost in a disastrous snow-storm, was a change made to spring lambing. Next, when Spring nor-westers had dried out the tussocks and long grass on the hill slopes, came "burning." Apparently the month of September was the earliest that this work could be done and November the latest as a rule, though this depended on the weather in the Spring. The nor'west wind had to be "just right." About a third of the Steventon run was burned each year[5] and a "clean burn" would enable the grass to come away short and green in the late Autumn and early Spring, providing most valu-

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1. Barker, "Station Life," page 102
2. Deans, op. cit., page 292 (Appendix)
3. Ibid page 293 (Appendix)
4. Barker, "Station Amusements," p. 239.
5. Barker, "Station Life" p. 194.

able pasture for stock. This system of "injudicious burning" was later condemned by runholders, since the native grasses were eliminated and in many places nothing was left but a stunted growth of vegetation unpalatable to stock.[1]

From November to January shearing was carried out. For days or weeks before hand the sheep were mustered from the hill country till the pens and yards around the shearing sheds were full of bleating sheep. In those days only blade shearing was known and a good shearer could take off 120 fleeces in a day, but 80 fleeces was a very good average. For this they were paid £1 a hundred and were "found in everything,"[2] i.e. had meals and accommodation provided. As the sheep were shorn, they were pushed out of a trap door in front of the shearer into small pens in which the shepherd or manager was able both tomake a check on the shearer's total, or "tally," and also look over the sheep for bad shearing or cuts from the blades. With the shearing season over there was the after shearing visit to town and a round of visits, parties and shopping.

There were several dangers to his flocks which the early runholder learned to fear, the most terrible of which, when no shelter was afforded by trees or fences, was that of snowstorms. A really heavy fall caused terrible losses. The worst of the earlier snowstorms was that in 1867 when the runs were just becoming established. It occurred, too, when lambing had in some cases only just commenced and in others had just finished, so that fearful losses resulted among lambs and ewes. Broome, who had the Steventon run then, was ruined. A succession of heavy snowfalls in 1878, 1888, 1895 and 1903, have all caused great financial loss,

1. Overton, "Fifty Years Sheep-farming in Canterbury, Otago and Southland" p. 43.
2. Barker, Station Life, P.33.

At Rockwood, in the 1903 snow-storm, Overtons lost about 800 sheep when they had just become established.[1] None the less "old hands" generally considered that this snowfall "could not be compared with those of 1868, 1879 and 1888."[2] The first of these dates (1868) is probably inaccurate, since it was the 1867 fall which caused such great losses in Canterbury.

It is interesting that an old weather prophet, writing under the nom de plume "Look Out," foretold the snowstorm of 1867. "There is every prognostication of a severe winter" he said, "and consequently plenty of snow on the hills."[3] When the country news came in after the snow-storm with reports of heavy losses everywhere,[4] it revealed how accurate the forecast had been. A report from Oxford indicated that snow had been "up to the door-handles."

Another danger, though not so great as from heavy snow, was that of floods. The Selwyn is normally a small river, especially in comparison with the Waimakariri and the Rakaia. However, with heavy rainfall in the Thirteen Mile Bush area and in the valleys leading into the Selwyn Gorge the river will rise rapidly. After leaving the Gorge, it sweeps out over a wide area and often alters its course entirely. During a heavy flood in 1868 the river cut entirely new and dangerous streams.[5] At these times sheep had to be mustered at once from the river-bed to higher levels, since they would either be drowned by rising waters or marooned by a change in the course of the river.

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1. Overton, op. cit. pages 35-36.
2. "The Press," July 18, 1910. "Back Country Runs."
3. Ibid April 4, 1867.
4. Ibid, August 6, 1867.
5. Barker, "Station Life," p. 217.

Another menace, a very real difficulty in the '60's, was that from the attacks of wild pigs. The "Captain Cookers" had increased with amazing rapidity in the new environment, and the hill country in the Malvern Hills district seemed particularly suitable. An old sow would follow the sheep from one camping place to another with great patience until a new-born or weakly lamb lagged behind the rest. Then she would immediately seize and devour it.[1] The presence of pigs on the run, apart from the losses they caused, kept the sheep in a continually excited state.

The Deans brothers, and later the trustees of the estate, have a fine record for their importation of pedigree stock, especially sheep, cattle and horses. The first breeding cattle, as well as the first lots of horses and sheep were introduced by them.[2] The magnificent Homebush herd developed from stock imported from Australia and flourished until the '70's, when the cattle slowly gave place to sheep.[3] But the run had carried up till then as many as 3,000 cattle. It is also claimed that the Deans had the first flock of merinos, a breed which has subsequently flourished in the harder climatic and pastoral conditions of the hill stations When another breed, which William Deans had early favoured -- the Southdown -- was imported by Henry Matson in the early '60's, the Deans' trustees secured some of them, and again in 1868 the same breeders imported on their own account a small lot of Southdown ewes and rams from England.[4]

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1. Barker, "Station Amusements," p. 46.
2. Speight, Wall & Laing, op. cit. p. 274.
3. Acland, op. cit. p. 22.
4. Speight, Wall & Laing, op. cit. p. 288.

Life in the Selwyn Valley in these years was essentially "simple", at times perhaps intensely lonely, but never austere or unpleasant. There were a few delightful pastimes and entertainments, some of them not lacking an element of risk, and nearly all of them out-of-doors and full of healthy exhilaration. Pig-hunting was carried out at suitable times of the year. In winter months skating expeditions from both Steventon and Malvern Hills spent periods of several days in the Lake Coleridge district. Also when the snow fell nearer home there was the opportunity to toboggan on the slopes behind the homestead, risking life and limb in the swift downhill rush.[1] Occasionally the neighbouring shepherds and farm hands and the women folk of the households would be invited to an impromptu dance. A picturesque account of such a function at Steventon in the '60's is given by Lady Barker[2]. It was no less a pleasure to pack up a dray or ride horses for a picnic in distant bush, or for a visit to a neighbouring run, even if the journey lay over a very rough track. Another means of recreation which demanded endless patience and long periods of waiting in the cold night air on the banks of the Selwyn, was eeling, and Lady Barker records vividly the cold and the cramp she experienced on such an expedition from Steventon. However her prophecy, that the work of the Acclimatization Society would be doomed to failure did not prove correct.[3] At this time the Society had only been in existence about three years -- it was commenced in May, 1864 -- and the first trout ova to reach New

1. Barker, "Station Amusements", P.83.
2. Ibid, P.208.
3. Ibid, P.37.

Zealand was a consignment from Tasmania which arrived in 1867. By 1870, however, the Society had stripped ova from Canterbury trout and soon after this it was acknowledged that the Selwyn River provided an almost ideal ground for trout.[1]

Another urgent matter which claimed the attention of the runholders was the planting of trees for shelter for their homes and flocks. The tree which seemed almost ideally suited to most conditions in the district was the pinus insignis. It grew quickly, even in poor soil, and gave splendid shelter in winter months. At this time serviceable shelter was the main consideration -- not till considerably later were trees planted extensively in Coalgate and Glentunnel domains for ornament or for milling purposes. It is interesting to compare Homebush estate in the early '50's, as Dr. Barker's photograph reveals it, when there were manuka-covered hills at the rear and tiny saplings of willows and poplars by the river, with Homebush as it is to-day, a delight to every lover of trees, especially giant Douglas firs, Oregons, larches and willows.[2] "Planting of trees for shelter and ornament will also be a great object with us as soon as we can raise the plants on our own ground."[3] So wrote John Deans from Riccarton in 1851. This object, both at Riccarton and Homebush, has been fully realised.

The twenty years under discussion belonged almost entirely to the runholder. They were his golden age. In addition to his freehold land, of which each runholder had up to about 100 acres, each purchaser had the right to lease five times that amount

1. Speight, Wall & Laing, op.cit., P.229-232.
2. Ibid. Page 253-4.
3. Deans, op,cit. P.201.

of unappropriated land. Such land was open for purchase, except that the intending purchaser had to give the lease-holder thirty days notice in order that, if he so desired, he could buy the land himself. This so-called 'pre-emptive right' was the weapon with which the runholder was soon to fight a losing battle with the 'cockatoo', or small farmer. By the early '60's all available sheep country land had been taken up.[1] However the 'cockatoo's' battle for land was not yet in the Selwyn Valley, though at Steventon any stranger riding round the estate was looked on with suspicion, since he might have been a 'cockatoo' looking for a choice piece of land in the hope of challenging the lease-holder's pre-emptive right.[2]

There were sure signs, however, that a new era was opening for the district. The sway of the runholder would be challenged--not by the small farmer till the water-race system opened up the plains, but by the miner. On a map of the Canterbury runs, dated 1856,[3] coal is marked in the Selwyn valley in two places, at what was later known as Sheath's Row, near Glentunnel, and at the entrance to the Selwyn Gorge, probably to mark either Knights or Harts' coal. A new day for the district had dawned slowly but the land sales of the late '60's provided further hopeful signs. On January 22, 1867, there was a report that 100 acres of land had been sold in the Malvern district.[4] Two months later, on March 9, 1867, another report showed that 144 acres had been sold.[5]

1. Butler, op. cit. p. 36.
2. Barker, "Station Amusements," p. 90.
3. Held by D. McMillan, Darfield.
4. "The Press," January 22, 1867.
5. Ibid, March 9, 1867.

The road up the Selwyn Valley, only partly and very poorly formed at this stage, was now being called the "Coal Track Road". It was the beginning of a busier and noisier period which would transform the district from a quiet and lonely pastoral area into a place with three growing townships and a newly formed railway. Sheep and cattle had held the primacy for twenty years. Their place was now to be taken by brown, lignite coal.

HOMEBUSH MINE, GLENTUNNEL, UNDER J. C. CAMPBELL (FOREGROUND)

Photo by Courtesy Miss J. Barlow.

CHAPTER II.

"BLACK DIAMONDS"

THE DISCOVERY OF COAL, 1870-1880.

In the "Handbook of New Zealand Mines" 1887, a report presented to the House of Representatives, it is claimed that coal was discovered in the South Malvern area, and more especially in that part later called Surveyor's Gully, by James Robinson in 1852.[1] Both the name and the date are incorrect. The mistake in the name may have occurred, as has already been discussed, because a Homebush stockman was familiarly called Jimmy Robinson. Clough's diary indicates that on November 2, 1851, he investigated coal in the Selwyn river bed in company with E. J. Wakefield,[2] somewhere near the site which was later called Sheath's Row when it was worked in the interests of J. B. Sheath, of Christchurch. A few days later samples of the coal were sent down to John Deans, at Riccarton, who reported the discovery of this seam "about 35 miles up on the plain, near my cattle station,"[3] to relatives in Scotland, but pointed out that though the seams were of good quality none was large enough for profitable working. However, some of the coal was sent to J. R. Godley, who in turn forwarded a specimen of it to the Canterbury Association with the advice that it had been discovered on the Deans run and "on the river named the Selwyn in our maps at a distance of about 25 miles from Christchurch."[4] The distance is obviously a mistake, since even John Deans's estimate of 35 miles is conservative. At the request of Godley

1. Handbook of N.Z. Mines 1887 Part II P.31-32.
2. Deans, "Pioneers of Canterbury", P.288. (Appendix)
3. Ibid. P.215.
4. Ibid. P.227. J. R. Godley to Canty.Ass., Jan.19, 1852.

a party of men including William and H. J. Cridland, the latter a surveyor and owner of property at Hoon Hay, E. J. Wakefield, and William Lyon, a close friend of William and John Deans, went to the Selwyn River to investigate the discovery. A subsequent report bearing Lyon's signature, and dated February 23, 1852, states that the coal was superior to any New Zealand coal yet seen, a compact black coal, easily lighted, which burned with a bright flame without the disagreeable sulphurous smell of Nelson coal.[1] Cridland, however, made an earlier report, dated January 19, 1852, which contained the sensational news of three coal seams, visible in the bed of the river, eleven feet, eight feet, and six feet wide respectively, the coal from which would compare favourably with Australian coal.[2] This was undoubtedly an inaccurate report, which no one took seriously, and consequently very little systematic mining was done on the site till Sheath worked it in the '70's. It was probably to this place, or to some other outcrop of coal on the Homebush estate, that the drays to which Robinson Clough referred in his diary came in 1852.[3]

In 1854 Richard Knight, who held Steventon with his brother, and a partner named Wright, began working coal in the Selwyn Valley at the entrance to the gorge and carted it in drays 40 miles to Christchurch.[4] This was in the area where Hill's pits were later opened, and the place was subsequently known as "Knight's Flat" or "Knight's Coal". The seams, though of good

1. "The Press", February 8, 1871, Reprint of Report.
2. "The Press", May 14, 1872. "The Malvern Hills".
3. Deans, op.cit. P.292 (Appendix)
4. Handbook of New Zealand Mines, 1887, Part II, Page 31-32.

quality, were very small, so that by the time Broome took over Steventon they were no longer worked, since the coal for use at Steventon was carted 12 miles,[1] possibly from Jebson's mine at Sheffield, which was opened in 1863. These seams, which Knight had worked, situated on the north bank of the Selwyn, were pointed out to Julius von Haast when he made his first short survey of Malvern Hills coalfields in 1861.[2] But since the thickest seam was only 20 inches and the whole outlier seemed very limited in extent he did not recommend that the area be set aside for a provincial reserve. Von Haast's 1861 survey was short and fairly cursory, since it extended over a wide area from Russell's Flat to the Selwyn River.[3]

In November, 1869, James Hector, made an inspection of the district's coal-bearing areas[4] but only refers to four mines in his report. Three of these, Jebson's, Kowai and Church Reserve, are on the northern side of Malvern Hills and consequently lie outside the scope of this study. But M. B. Hart, of Christchurch, destined to play a considerable part in the future of Malvern coal production, had begun work on the north side of the Selwyn River almost where Knight had worked some years before. Hart had enjoyed better fortune. The coal was being worked on a low isolated spur, which jutted out into the valley, and though the thickest seam was only 2 feet 9 inches it was considered of very good quality. Moreover, Hart certainly did not lack enterprise and initiative. About July, 1870, he sent up several bags of his coal

1. Barker, "Station Life," p. 61.
2. J. von Haast, "Preliminary Report on Geology of Malvern Hills' July 1871, p. 140.
3. H.F. von Haast, "Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast" p.184
4. J. Hector, "On the Geological Structure of Malvern Hills district, Canterbury," 25 November, 1869, pages 46-55.

per S.S. "Taranaki" to Wellington to be tried out on the fires in the House of Representatives. As a result of this bold stroke he received a congratulatory telegram from William Rolleston.[1] Scarcely a month earlier, John Hall, (later Sir John Hall, of Hororata), had pointed out in the House that a new pit had recently been opened in the Malvern Hills[2] and he now had opportunity to call members' attention to the excellent quality of the coal produced.[3] A few days later a glowing report from the "Independent" of Wellington[4] reached Christchurch which stated that for heat-giving qualities and freedom from unpleasant smell the Malvern Hills coal "takes the palm." A later report[5] judged the coal "equal in every respect to English or New South Wales coal," but it is very doubtful whether Malvern Hills coal did compare satisfactorily with these coals, except to a biassed observer.

None the less Hart's enterprising action in sending coal to Wellington was the beginning of a long series of addresses to public figures and letters to the papers which ended ultimately in the South Malvern district being opened up by railway. In bringing his coal before the people of the province at every possible opportunity, Hart had a considerable part in achieving this end.

Newspaper authorities also took up the task and were eager to seize on any report from the Malvern Hills which gave prospect of more coal. For the next five years -- at least till the railway went through in 1874 -- there was a mild 'fever' to bring the coal

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1. "The Press,", July 23, 1870.
2. N.Z. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. VII, June 30, 1870, p. 160.
3. Ibid, Vol. VIII, July 22, 1870, p. 50.
4. "The Press" July 25, 1870.
5. Ibid, August 1, 1870.

down to the Christchurch public, which was paying far too highly for New South Wales coal. A correspondent "Fair Play" on August 10, 1872, objected to the price of coal at £3 - £3:10: - a ton.[1] However, further news from the Malvern Hills was not long in coming. On September 29, 1870, word was received[2] that a seam of anthracite coal three feet thick had been discovered on the property of H.P. Hill, in the Malvern Hills, and the hope was expressed that this find would settle the question whether coal existed in sufficient quantity to make the work remunerative. It was suggested later, by von Haast,[3] that Hill had found this seam by tracing small coal-bearing strata from his own property, Steventon, across the Selwyn river to the north side of the valley where, at the entrance to the gorge, he had found the seams more developed in thickness and of superior quality. However, it was not anthracite coal but what is technically called "altered."

von Haast's Surveys; The question of how much coal existed in this district was now to be settled in quite a different way. On Tuesday, November 8, 1870, von Haast left Christchurch for an extensive survey of the Malvern Hills,[4] and from this time till January 1871, then from the end of April to the end of May, and again in September, he was engaged in the Malvern Hills,[5] which became a "standing dish in his geological bill of fare."[6] He was to put the boring machine beside the pick-axe, and to give to

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1. Ibid, August 10, 1872.
2. Ibid, September 29,1870.
3. J. von Haast, op. cit., p. 140.
4. "The Press," November 8, 1870.
5. H.F. von Haast, op. cit. p. 645.
6. Ibid p. 185.

mining experience the additional advantage of scientific knowledge. Emphasis and publicity were given to von Haast's visit when Hart began a campaign of extensive advertising in the daily newspapers. With recent success in the House of Representatives in his favour the advertisement read: "Encourage native industry. Hart's celebrated Malvern coal. Can now be obtained in any quantity at the pit. For steam purposes, at 16/- per ton."[1] Hart guaranteed accommodation at the pit head for men and cattle and gave assurance that roads were in good condition. This latter was an over-statement, since the South Malvern Road Board did not begin its activity till 1871 and much of the coal road up the Selwyn Valley had not yet been metalled. A few days later a party of Christchurch men who had inspected Hart's mine returned with glowing accounts of almost everything they saw, except the roads. The seam was wide, the coal of better quality, ten tons were being produced daily and the coal was being used extensively on the plains and was frequently carted to the Selwyn railway station where it had a ready sale at £2 per ton. Very rosy hopes were expressed for the future if the roads were better and a Thomson road steamer could be used for carting the coal.[2] The neighbouring plains, the city of Christchurch, the town of Lyttelton and the numerous ships which called there could then all be supplied!

When von Haast returned to Christchurch his preliminary report on the Malvern Hills[3] with practical suggestions for their development was laid on the table of the Provincial Countil on July 18, 1871, and made much more sober proposals for the future

1. "The Press," December 9, 1870.
2. Ibid, December 12,1870.
3. Journal Proceedings of Canterbury Provincial Council, July 18, 1871.

of the coalfields. The most interesting feature of the report, perhaps, is that von Haast shows clearly that there were two entirely different types of coal available in the Malvern Hills.-- so-called "altered" and "unaltered" coal. The workings at both Hart's and Hill's mines were examined, and both of these belonged to the "altered" coal series. In Hill's drive, particularly, the essential characteristics of "altered" coal-bearing areas could be clearly seen. The Selwyn Gorge bears many indications of intense volcanic activity and von Haast suggested that the eruption of igneous rocks and their heat and pressure, both during and after the deposition of the coal, had caused its 'altered' character.[1] By this is meant that it had a hard shiny appearance and more closely resembled anthracite coal than the brown lignite. Another explanation of the history of volcanic action is given in the "Natural History of Canterbury"[2] -- "Fissures must have formed freely in all directions and liquid rock been injected from below, both as vertical walls called 'dykes' or as more or less horizontal sheets called 'sills'. The former are particularly common in the Malvern Hills where coal has been frequently altered by their agency, and the same area furnishes excellent examples of sills, such as the great sill of the Acheron ...." Between von Haast and Hector a wide divergence of judgment existed on Malvern Hills coal, since the latter would scarcely agree that the "altered" and "unaltered" coal bearing areas were so clearly marked, or that the coal itself was so very different in composition.[3]

Some time before von Haast's visit Hill had begun to sink

1. J. von Haast, op.cit. P.140.
2. Speight, Wall & Laing, "Natural History of Canterbury" P.79.
3. Appendix to Journ. of House of Reps., 1873, VolII, E10, P.30-31

a shaft down to the coal seams some distance away from the mouth of his drive. After driving to a depth of 45 feet the coal measures had been reached, but Hill was unable to continue the work because of inadequate equipment for lifting the water from the shaft.[1] It was a bad sign. The shaft was fairly close to the Selwyn, as was Hart's mine also. Once the workings got below the level of the river both these mines were doomed. One resident remembers seeing his father up to his armpits in water in Hart's mine in the '70's. This mine was sometimes called "Hart's Folly",[2] no doubt much more because of this danger of flooding than because of the quality of coal produced, which was, perhaps, the best ever dug from the Malvern Hills.

During his stay at Selwyn Gorge von Haast carefully examined the extent of the 'altered coal' outliers, and considered that the total field was approximately two miles long and half a mile wide so that there was a square mile over which workable seams might be expected.[3] He estimated that possibly 3,000,000 tons of coal existed in this area, but at the same time issued a cautionary note that the amount available might be considerably less than this, perhaps only half, if the igneous rocks existed among the coal measures. None the less, he considered that the province could obtain 20,000 tons annually for 75 years. Unfortunately it was subsequently proved that the seams of altered coal were very much more broken by volcanic activity than von Haast had thought. 'Altered' seams in this region were in the main isolated and broken, at times promising well but ending abruptly, at other

1. J. von Haast, op.cit., P.140.
2. "The Press", February 2, 1871, "A Visit to Malvern Hills Coalfields"
3. J. von Haast, op.cit., P.141.

times dwindling away to a size too small for profitable working. A very small portion of the quantity of coal von Haast had hoped for was ever gained.

The 'altered' coal seams existed in the Selwyn Gorge district and in a very small area among the paleozoic and porphyritic rocks. But the 'unaltered' series of coal seams was to have far more promising and later productive results. These seams began on the banks of the Hawkins near Sheffield, where Jebson's mine had been working for seven years, and continued in an almost unbroken line, except where broken through by the Selwyn and its tributaries, to the Hororata River. By following this line for a distance of approximately 16 miles, (i.e. right through the centre of the Malvern Hills district), von Haast found brown coal "more or less exposed in 22 different localities, in deep gullies, in land slips, and in the lower gorges and banks of the rivers,"[1] and in some cases the indications of coal measures were followed up and exposed with pick and spade. In Surveyors' Gully, the valley of a small tributary of the Selwyn (which runs up in a north-westerly direction from the present township of Glentunnel), the richest seams were found. There is some doubt as to who actually 'found' this seam which later developed the most profitable workings in the Malvern Hills in the period under consideration. Von Haast indicates that he discovered it;[2] but it seems certain that James McIlraith, manager of Homebush station, was with von Haast at the time of the survey, though the date given by one authority (1872) is inaccurate.[3] It is possible that McIlraith knew of the

1. J. von Haast, op.cit. P.138.
2. Ibid. P.138.
3. Handbook of N.Z. Mines (1887) Part II, P.31-32.

seam before it was investigated. Several local residents, however, claim that the Surveyors' Gully seam was discovered by Fred. Bull Senr., who, as a stockman at Homebush, saw the outcrop of coal in a land-slip when he was looking for cattle after heavy rain. It was known that coal seams existed in quite a number of places[1] before von Haast's survey and it is at least possible that Surveyors' Gully was one of these.

As a result of this survey von Haast estimated that the possible yield from the Surveyors' Gully field would be approximately 3,000,000 tons, all of which could be obtained level free. He therefore recommended that the railway line be continued from Rolleston railway station to the Surveyors' Gully creek which would be right in the centre of the coal-fields and would give ready access to Hart's and Hill's mines as well as to those on the Homebush property. Von Haast also foresaw the possibilities of wide areas of plains being opened up in this way. Such a railway line would materially benefit the settlers in the Selwyn Valley and would also contribute to the progress of the Hororata and Upper Rakaia district.[2]

Surveyors' Gully. The Homebush mine was opened on March 7, 1872. There was an official opening ceremony, and David McMillan, of Darfield, remembers being taken by his father as a very small boy, and being left in the manuka scrub for shelter from a cold wind, while Mrs. Deans, a remarkably capable and energetic woman,

1. R. Speight, "Geology of Malvern Hills", 1928, Page 17.
2. J. von Haast, op.cit., P.144-5.

went into the mouth of the mine to strike off a piece of coal to celebrate the occasion. However, it was some time before the mine produced coal in any great quantity. There were two main reasons for this -- first, the difficulties of access up a rough valley 1½ miles from the main road, which were intensified when a local property owner would not allow access to the valley except on payment of a high royalty rate; and secondly, McIlraith waited to commence full production till he was sure of a railway line, at least to Surveyors' Gully. A correspondent from Hororata wrote at this time that the Homebush mine was waiting for the certainty of a tramway and that Hart's coalpits were still supplying allcomers, though the coal had been smaller in size than usual. However, the miners were anticipating an increased supply.[1] There is nothing to equal the optimism of miners when they are almost "on the coal."

About three months after the mine was opened a huge block of coal weighing 1 ton 3 cwt., which measured seven feet long, three feet wide, and two feet deep, was cut out from Surveyors' Gully mine, carted down to Christchurch, and presented to the Museum.[2]

Unfortunately, it was reported that the donor was M.B. Hart, who had expressed great pleasure in making the presentation, which he hoped would be a practical testimony to the "enormous mineral wealth in the district." The next day, however, a correction came from von Haast who stated that the coal was not from Hart's estate but from Deans's, that the donor was James

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1. "The Press," December 11, 1871.
2. Ibid, May 14, 1872.

McIlraith, not M. B. Hart, and that the coal was not equal in quality to that of New South Wales but was of good quality and younger origin. He pointed out, also, that the railway to the coal-bearing district could not be built in one day since the necessary materials had to be brought from the other side of the globe.[1] At the end of this year McIlraith was carting the coal out to the government road (a distance of about 2 miles) where it could be purchased at 16/- a ton. A local observer, judged that it would not stand the weather as well as Hart's coal,[2] -- a justifiable criticism because Homebush lignige was a much softer coal.

The other reason for delay in production, the problem of access to Homebush mine, was a major one. In 1873 McIlraith began to make plans for a coal tramway to carry the coal down the gully to the main roadway. But the owner of land which stretched across the valley was prepared to give access only in return for a substantial royalty. Some doubt exists as to who the owner was, but there seems no reason for this. A correspondent to the "Press" suggested that it was Jebson,[3] perhaps because it was considered that he would wish to retain, as far as possible, a coal monopoly. Jebson immediately corrected this statement, naming the owner as J. B. Sheath,[4] and pointing out also that he had no connection at all with the Jebsons who worked at Sheath's Row mine in the Selwyn River bed. It appears certain that Sheath owned the section, though another man suggested was Thomas Thacker,

1. Ibid. May 15, 1872.
2. Ibid. December 9, 1872.
3. Ibid. August 9, 1873.
4. Ibid. September 3, 1873.

who owned land and a sod cottage on the western side of Surveyors' Gully close to the present railway line. The reason for a measure of uncertainty is that there were at least twelve maps of the district some of which did not agree on details, and the confusion was particularly difficult in this gully.[1] If the coal tramway were to pass through his property Sheath demanded a way-leave rate of 2/6 per ton and therefore, in order to avoid what appeared to be an excessive charge, McIlraith commissioned W. B. Bray to survey a tunnel through the hill adjoining this section.[2] This tunnel, estimated at 12-13 chains long, was cut through in a year at an estimated cost of £700-£800. To the right of the old tramway road, up the gully and across swampy ground, the entrance to this tunnel may still be seen, though much of it has now fallen in. It was abandoned in 1884, after being used for about ten years, when John Deans obtained possession of the disputed section.

Yet another prominent scientist visited Malvern Hills in 1873, Captain F. W. Hutton. His report[3] is brief and sketchy, possibly because Hector and von Haast had already made careful surveys, and to their work he makes reference. Hutton considered the Malvern coal inferior to several other New Zealand coals but the accessibility of the area and its proximity to Christchurch made Malvern Hills coalfields "one of the most important we possess."

Since so many reports had been made of the "enormous" extent

1. Ibid. June 3, 1875.
2. Handbook of N.Z. Mines, 1887, P.31-32.
3. Hutton, "Report on Geology of North-Eastern Portion of the South Island" 1873. Pages 27-58.

of the Malvern Hills coalfields, the Provincial Council set up, in 1873, a select coal supply committee to receive evidence regarding the amount of coal available.[1] Prominent members of the Committee were Maude, Hayhurst, Inglis, Marshall, Peacock and Bluett and among those called to give evidence or present papers were Colonel Brett, von Haast, Jebson, Hart and McIlraith. The report of the committee was produced and read in the Provincial Council on June 6th, 1873.[2] One mine owner, possibly McIlraith, said in evidence "I call mine a brown coal. I have had a good demand for it. I sold the coal at 16/- a ton delivered one mile and a half from the pit's mouth. I think that, with a fair demand I could deliver it at the pit mouth for 12/- a ton ... Drays were coming a distance of 20 and 30 miles to get it ... If we had a road we could get coal enough to supply all Christchurch, provided it takes and we can get men to work it."[3] However, the present railway lines in course of construction were considered adequate for the need and a suggestion of a further line from Racecourse Hill to Ben Mohr met with decided opposition from von Haast, who seriously questioned the evidence of some of the coal-proprietors, and it was suggested that Hector and Hutton should be asked to give further evidence. The difference of opinion was particularly sharp between von Haast and Jebson,[4] -- the oldeclash between the 'practical' man on the spot and the 'scientific' man in the laboratory. Subsequent years were to prove that the scientific

1. Journal of Proceedings of Canty. Provincial Council, May,7, 1873.
2. Ibid. June 6, 1873.
3. "Official Handbook of New Zealand", published 1875, edited J. Vogel, Page 133.
4. H. F. von Haast, op.cit. P.526 and 664.

man, remote from the scene but not from its realities, was right.

Steventon, Rockwood and Sheath's Row. At the end of the same year the name of another mine was added, that of "Steventon", where workings were begun under George Scott, who managed the mine for the Cordy brothers, owners of Steventon after Hill. The coal was advertised at 18/- a ton at the pit-head and there was reported to be a good supply.[1] Mining operations, some large, some small, some temporary and some permanent and profitable, were now commencing in a number of places. In 1874, near Rockwood, coal of a payable kind was found by William Smart, a mining engineer, and the mine was called 'Brockleigh'. The seam varied from six feet to three feet in thickness and was almost perpendicular.[2] Another mining enthusiast who deserves mention was W. ("Cabbage") Wilson, of Christchurch, who discovered coal in the Steventon creek in 1878[3], very close to where the Whitecliffs mine was driven shortly afterwards. As some of these mines were a considerable distance from Whitecliffs township and across the Selwyn river, a number of miners rode on horseback to their work. A well-known resident of early South Malvern who had the task of carting coal across the river in drays was William Leeming.

Miners were also at work at Sheath's Row, in the Selwyn River just at the entrance to Surveyors' Gully. Heaps of rubble long since covered with weeds and grass are all that remain to-day of a site that once possessed an overhead bridge and much valuable mining and pumping equipment and boasted a row of box-like cottages which were later shifted to Glentunnel township. Early in 1875

1. "The Press", November 22, 1873.
2. Handbook of N.Z. Mines, 1887, Part II, P.31-32.
3. Ibid.

a report from Jebson,[1] (not to be confused with John Jebson, of Sheffield), stated that an 80 ft. shaft had been sunk into the bed of the Selwyn River, and that coal six feet thick had been found, which it was estimated would yield 7,200 tons to the acre. The shaft was too close to the Selwyn River, however, and the mine had to contend with the possibility of flooding, and required expensive pumping equipment. Later, in 1879, Wallsend Mine, as it was officially called, was sub-let to Cummings and Company who had a contract to raise 6,000 tons of coal from it.[2] In 1882 after some years of working the total tonnage won from this mine had been only 3,478 tons.[3] Two factors settled the fate of Wallsend -- one, the excessive quantities of water which had to be pumped out of the shaft, and the other that the workings extended under the railway and endangered it.

Homebush Workings. Since Homebush Mine was by far the most important and productive at that time it deserves some closer investigation. When the tunnel was cut in 1874 a tramway was laid, with light iron rails on a 2ft.6 inches gauge, from the scene of the workings to the pottery works and the tip head, a distance of about 1½ miles.[4] On this tramway the coal was carried in wooden hutches, or "boxes", as the miners called them, each of which contained a half-ton of coal. They were hauled up to the workings by horses at first, then for a short period by a small steam engine, and then latterly by horses again. When the full "boxes" of coal were brought down the steep slope on which the seams were situated it was necessary for the trucker to "sprag"

1. "The Press", January 9, 1875.
2. Appendix to Journal of House of Reps. 1879, Vol.II, H.16. P.15.
3. Ibid, 1882, Vol.II, H.13. P.25.
4. Handbook of N.Z. Mines, 1887, Part II, Pages 31-32.

the wheels of some of the boxes, (i.e. push a strong manuka stick through the spokes), in order to check their progress. Once on the flat valley the coal was hauled by horses to the pottery-works, either to be used for heating the brick-kilns or to be sent by rail to Christchurch, once the railway was completed.

The principal workings of the old Homebush mine are on the eastern side of Surveyors' Gully.[1] Blackberry bushes are now rapidly closing in on what was once a scene of great activity. Several seams could be traced on both sides of the valley, in accordance with von Haast's theory that coal existed in an almost unbroken line from the Hawkins River to the Hororata.[2] The main seam on the eastern side of the gully was almost 7 feet thick and was worked extensively for about 40 chains along the strike, about 8 chains to the dip and 9 chains to the rise. Latterly the coal in the rise grew thin and stone developed in the dip, but it was no doubt one of the most productive seams. It was familiarly called the "Old Seven Foot". Just above it was a seam 3 feet 6 inches also worked considerably and about 40 feet higher up the valley was the "Engine" seam -- 5 feet thick. This had also been mined very extensively and though it had developed stone latterly, there was still a large field of good unworked coal which had to be left behind when it caught fire spontaneously.

On the western side of the gully the uppermost seam was called the "Coronation" and was 4 feet thick when worked, but also proved unsatisfactory because stone was encountered. A short distance above this another seam occurred of similar

1. Speight, op.cit. P.20-24.
2. J. von Haast, op.cit. Page 143, and J. von Haast "Report on Geology of Malvern Hills" October 1871, Map. P. 88.

thickness but not of very great extent.

Then came the well-known "Smithy" seam, 3 feet 6 inches, or more in width, which was thought to be a continuation of the 3 feet 6 inches seam above the "Old Seven Foot" on the other side of the gully. Below this again was a small seam, only about 2 feet, which did not appear opposite and therefore it was thought that it probably passed into the "Old Seven Foot". Another 3 foot 6 inches seam was worked below the "Smithy" at a short distance. However, when followed, it closed up rapidly towards the "Smithy" seam so that these two seams probably represented asplitting of the "Old Seven Foot" and the smaller 2 feet seam may have belonged to the same bed.

At first only two seams were worked on the eastern side, the 3 feet 6 inches seam and the 7 feet seam, under McIlraith as general manager and Thomas Brown, a broad and canny Scot, as mine manager. The output in 1876 was approximately 200 tons a month. An official report in 1882 gave the following details -- the total output for 1881 had been 5,673 tons of coal and 260 tons of slack. Fourteen men were employed. The total output to date (1882) had been 25,995 tons.[1]

The cost of coal varied at this time from about 16/- to £1 a ton. Hart's coal was advertised at 16/- in 1870,[2] Homebush Colliery charged 16/- in 1873 for coal delivered to the main road,[3] Steventon in the same year offered coal at 18/- a ton.[4] For

1. Appendix to Journal House of Reps. 1882, Vol. II, Sect.H.13. P.25.
2. "The Press" December 9, 1870.
3. Ibid. December 9, 1872.
4. Ibid. November 22, 1872.

cutting out the coal the miner was paid 8/- a day. At the same period carpenters earned 10/- a day and a boy on a farm 8/- to 12/- a week (including "keep".)[1]

The Pottery Industry: An important industry which developed side by side with coal-mining was that of brick-making. The Malvern Hills district was almost ideal for pottery works since plentiful supplies of both red and fire-clays of excellent quality occurred in close proximity to the coal mines. In his report von Haast made special reference to the fire-clays available in the district, and realised their economic importance. "In the younger paleozoic rocks," he said,[2] "in connection with shaly beds and conglomerates, as for instance in the Malvern Hills, there occur some indurated clays (shales) which in time to come will doubtless be extensively used by the potter. There are some fine fire-clays in connection with the former for ornamental work (terra-cotta) and for more general purposes, such as drainage pipes, earthenware, fire-bricks and many other objects which formerly had all to be imported from the home country."

At a later date John Deans sent samples of the Homebush clay to a firm of manufacturers in Liverpool and received a report from them that "for taking salt glaze the clay was as good as any of its class they had seen, and they only wished that they had a similar clay on their premises."[3]

The potters were not long on coming to the Selwyn Valley, using the coal won from the surrounding hills to heat their furnaces, The first account of such work appears in 1872, when a new

1. Official Handbook of N.Z. edited J.Vogel, 1875, p. 135.
2. J. von Haast, "Geology of Canterbury & Westland" p. 404.
3. N.Z. Mining Handbook 1906, p. 391.

'industry' was reported in the district, that of brick-making.[1] John Hobbs, of Whitecliffs, having found suitable clay on his land, had put up a large shed for drying the bricks and a pug-mill for preparing the clay. It is by no means certain that this was the first pottery works in the district, for it has been claimed that the Homebush works were commenced in 1870.[2] But since the Homebush mine was not producing coal at this time, it seems likely that the pottery commenced later than this. The Homebush factory was an extensive brick building with two large kilns attached, and up to 1887 between £4,000 and £5,000 had been expended on the factory and the necessary machinery.[3]

Several attempts at pottery work in the South Malvern district were abortive and had a short history. Apart from Hobbs other names connected with the industry were Ford and Ogden and Thomas Condliffe. Ford and Ogden's factory was commodious and well established in the '80's and provided work, both in the factory and in getting clay, for a considerable number of men -- at times between 20 and 30. There was at this time great activity on the hillsides[4] behind where the South Malvern railway station now stands mainly in getting supplies of clay and ganister for the adjacent pottery works.

When Ford and Ogden's factory was bought out by Sir Henry Wigram, and closed down, a great industry was lost to the South Malvern township. A man who commenced a small terra-cotta works on his own near Hart's coal pit in 1879, and who was recognised

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1. "The Press," December 9, 1872.
2. "Cyclopaedia of New Zealand," Vol. III, 1903, p. 754.
3. "Handbook of N.Z. Mines," 1887, Part II, p. 32.
4. Speight, op. cit. p. 25.

as a modeller of very good class, was Thomas Condliffe. He made small quantities of fancy pottery and used a horse to drive his pug mill and to cart his ware to the Whitecliffs Station. A horse-driven 'pug-mill' was also used at Homebush for a number of years.

This new industry, like that of coal-mining, was not long in being recognised in Christchurch. On December 5, 1872, it was proposed in the Provincial Council by S.P. Andrews that a sum of £250 be offered under suitable conditions to the first person in the Province who manufactured fire-bricks, chimney pots, and glazed drain pipes to the value of not less than £2,000.[1] In addition to the pottery works established in the South Malvern district by 1880, considerable quantities of clay were sent to such Christchurch firms as I.B. Sheath, and Austin and Kirk, where drain pipes, preserving jars, vases and other wares were made. When writing a report of the Local Industries Exhibition held at Christchurch in 1880[2] Edward Wakefield said that pottery ware was among the most important exhibits and that 150 persons were now employed in such manufacture in the province.

Many significant changes had taken place in this small district since Lady Barker wrote from the peaceful surroundings at Steventon in 1867. Then only the note of the wēka, or the bleating of sheep at shearing time, disturbed the stillness. Ten years later miners were riding across the Selwyn to work in the numerous mines at Whitecliffs, others were walking or riding up Surveyors'

1. Journal Proceedings of Provincial Council, Dec. 5, 1872.
2. Appendix to J.H.R., 1880, Vol. II, H. 22, p. 137-9.

Gully, others pumping water out of Sheath's Row. A number of men were making bricks and stoking furnaces and others were cutting out clay. There were new settlers and much activity. Buildings were going up in the Selwyn Valley. Two factors, above others, helped at length to make these new settlers into a strong community. The first was the speedy construction of roads and bridges and a railway in the '70's to end the days of isolation. The other was the building of a place for concerts, bands, dances, church services -- the expression of community life. In those early days such a building was nearly always the public school.

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CHAPTER III.

"COAL TRACKS"

RAILWAY, ROADS, BRIDGES, PUBLIC WORKS, 1870-1880.

A new period began in the district of South Malvern in 1870 when miners discovered coal in the dull, scrub-covered hills on which sheep and cattle had grazed since the '50's. For the next few years there was continual agitation by letters, and by personal approaches to local bodies and to Government officials to open up the wealth of the Malvern Hills to the people of Canterbury.

No one took a more determined stand in the campaign for a railway than did E. Jerningham Wakefield, a brother of the coloniser and of the colonel killed at Wairau, who was affectionately known to very early settlers in South Malvern as "Teddy". He was connected with the history of this district from the very early times and an old Coalgate family will proudly show an engineer's hammer which he presented to Kenneth Wilson -- and a beer-jar! In 1852 he assisted Cridland and Lyon to make an investigation of the first coal seams found at Homebush[1], and from that time was actively interested in the progress of the district for at least 25 years.

After Von Haast had made his thorough investigation of the Malvern Hills in 1870-71 he made three alternative suggestions for railway routes. The first was that the southern branch of the Malvern Hills line should reach as far as Surveyors' Gully, and thus give access to Homebush and Hart's Pits, as well as to a wide area of surrounding country, which would be opened up. He also suggested a line right up to Hart's Flat and across the

1. "The Press", February 8, 1871.

nearby saddle to Russell's Flat, eventually to open up the Kowhai district. The third suggested railway was to skirt the Malvern Hills from the central station at Surveyor's Gully proceeding towards Jebsom's mine and so on to the Kowhai. Ultimately only the first suggestion proved in any measure satisfactory, but von Haast's recommendations were an important factor in obtaining a railroad to the Malvern Hills coalfields.

Later the same year Wakefield wrote a trenchant criticism of railway and cartage costs. At this time coal was taken from Hart's mine to Rolleston in drays to be railed to Christchurch. Wakefield claimed that the freight charges were so heavy (24/- a ton cartage to Rolleston and 13/6 a ton railage and wharfage) that the coal, though superior, as he considered, to the New South Wales product, could not possibly compete with it on the same market. Further, Wakefield pointed out that the distance from Hart's Pits to Rolleston was only 28 miles, that there was a railway reserve for the whole of the distance so that not an acre of land needed to be purchased, and, since the Waireka and the Hawkins rivers were dry most of the year and would be easily bridged, there were no major engineering difficulties. He hoped that, if a light railway were constructed, the coal could be brought to Christchurch at an estimated cost of 17/2 a ton.[1]

In the following year George Hart, in an address to electors in the Coleridge electorate, took up the attack, when he gave assurance that valuable districts like the Malvern Hills, abounding in mineral wealth, would as soon as possible be placed in

1. "The Press", December 13, 1870.

communication with the railway system.[1] Later in the same year an official report on railway communication with the Malvern Hills was presented to the House of Representatives by W. B. Bray, together with supporting evidence from Hart and Jebson.[2] In his report Bray stressed the advisability of a railway line in order to bring coal to the Canterbury consumer at a moderate cost and thus check the drain of £25,000 sent annually out of the province for the purchase of coal. The total amount of coal imported in 1870, he claimed, had been 20,698 tons and Hart and Jebson alone could supply 80 to 100 tons daily of good quality coal, which could be used for all the province and for visiting ships, and which would be obtained from places that were easily accessible. Railway lines had been reserved, the report went on to show, to both these collieries and preliminary surveys had already been carried out. On the northern line the terminus would be near the Kowhai at a distance of 32 miles from Rolleston, and the southern line would branch off at Colonel Brett's and run in a westerly direction approximately 14¾ miles to the proposed terminus at Surveyors' Gully. Bray recommended, also, that the line could profitably be continued 2½ miles further up the Selwyn Valley so that Hart's and Hill's mines could be better served.

Another method of carting the coal to Christchurch, received with favour and enthusiasm, was by means of the Thomson road steamer.[3] These huge engines had caused great excitement on their arrival in the province but they were never very satisfactory

1. Ibid, January 19, 1871.
2. Appendix to Journal of House of Representatives, 1871. D-2a, Pages 4 & 5 and D-6b Page 50.
3. The Press, December 12, 1870.

for hauling on the plains, and, just at this time, a long letter in support of the Malvern Hills railway paints a dismal picture of the future of the Thomson engine.[1] It would never get past Colonel Brett's and certainly could not cross the Hawkins or the Waireka! The final story of the Thomson steamer was told two days later and ended in amusing and pathetic failure. In a trip to carry grain from Colonel Brett's to Rolleston the engine had broken down several times, and in addition had used 800 gallons of water, all of which had to be carted long distances across the plains in drays.[2]

In the meantime the support for a railroad continued. An important factor which speeded up the public demand was the amount of money which was sent out of the country annually to pay for coal.[3] In 1874-5 a total of 66,904 tons of imported coal were received at Lyttelton.[4] At a time when there were growing unemployment problems the value of the coal industry to the province was also a consideration. Once again E. J. Wakefield waged literary warfare for the construction of a railway to Malvern Hills,[5] supporting his argument by the Provincial Council Resolution of November 1870, which had provided that under the provisions of the Immigration and Public Works Act, 1870, railway lines should be constructed to Malvern Hills and to Oxford. In November 1870, and again in July 1871 railway extension to both places was considered by the Provincial Council.[6] As a result

1. Ibid, May 29, 1871.
2. Ibid, May 31, 1871.
3. Appendix to J.H.R., 1871, D-6B Page 50, Report of W.B.Bray.
4. Ibid, 1875, Vol.II, H-27A, Page 2.
5. "The Press", May 30, 1871.
6. Journal Proceedings of Provincial Council, July 20, 1871, P.19.

of these works, Wakefield claimed great benefit would be given to the poor and unemployed, who were feeling the burden of the financial depression which gripped the province in the early '70's. At a meeting of unemployed at Gloucester Street in September, 1870, 80 men had registered in one day.[1] Wakefield suggested also that a public meeting should be called, to which all Canterbury members of both Houses should be invited, and urged a light railway right up the Selwyn Gorge to the Thirteen Mile bush to bring down black birch sleepers for railway construction work. Public support for Wakefield was not lacking, for in July, 1871, "Onlooker" wrote that he had watched two enormous trains, heavily laden with coal trucks, arriving at Christchurch from Lyttelton and would have found the sight much more gratifying if they had been reaching Christchurch from the interior.[2] It must have given some encouragement to these men to know that a sum of £10,000 was on the Estimates for the year ending September 30, 1872, for the Malvern Hills railway.[3] Sensational news for an interested public was provided when two reports appeared concerning gold discoveries in the Malvern Hills.[4] Fortunately, it appears that no one took the news seriously!

A year later, the first schedule of the Rolleston-Malvern Hills railway was published[5] with provision for two branch lines, the northern to serve Jebson's colliery and the southern to run to a point in close proximity to Hart's mine. Scarcely a month later it was reported that the line was already staked out, that

1. "The Press", September 22, 1870.
2. Ibid, July 15, 1871.
3. Journal Proceedings of Prov. Council, 1872, Appropriation Accounts to September 30, 1872, page 5.
4. "The Press", April 25, & August 15, 1871.
5. N.Z. Gazette, 1872, April 6, page 216.

over half the sections were finished and that fifteen miles of tracings would be ready for the Engineer-in-chief within a few days.[1] Some indication of progress was made when on August 2, 1872, tenders were called for eleven miles of the Rolleston-Malvern Hills railway.[2]

It was some progress, but it was by no means enough. For in 1873 the price of Australian coal was £3 a ton, and labour disorders and strikes in New South Wales caused Canterbury settlers to fear that the price would rise much higher[3] and therefore it became a matter of great urgency to speed up the construction of a railway to Malvern Hills. In February, 1873 a crowded meeting was held in the Oddfellows Hall, in Christchurch, to urge that this work be completed as quickly as possible. It was such a day as local miners had hoped for, because the Christchurch public seemed solidly behind them. A resolution was passed urging the government to press on with all speed in providing a railway and increased wharfage at Lyttelton. In the general enthusiasm which prevailed the local coal proprietors passed the bounds of wisdom in making amazing and impossible promises. Jebson said that there was coal from the Waimakariri River to the Rakaia, which there certainly was, but much of it in small and unprofitable seams, sometimes of very inferior quality. Sheath, however, seconded the motion, and Hart proclaimed the day one of the proudest of his life, the

1. "The Press", May 8, 1872.
2. Ibid, August 2, 1872.
3. Ibid, February 10, 1873.

grand consummation of sixteen years of labour to bring Malvern Hills coal before the notice of the public. He was "perfectly prepared to supply all Canterbury", and would promise to produce the coal in Christchurch for "say 30/- a ton".[1]

It seems at this time that, in spite of the recommendations of von Haast and Bray, it was intended that the railway should terminate at Surveyors' Gully, and not be extended to Whitecliffs. A deputation of local residents found this to be still the case when, in March, 1873, they waited on the Minister for Public Works who recommended that all concerned should get an ordnance passed through the Provincial Council so that the line could be continued to Wilson's Point.[2] This was a place some distance up the Selwyn Valley from where Whitecliffs station now stands, at which limestone was prepared in the early days. It was probably named after W. Wilson of Christchurch, who carried out mining work in that district very early. The petition, which provided for the northern branch of the line to be extended to Porter's Pass and the southern to Hart's and Hill's mines, was presented in the Provincial Council on May 6 by Hon. E. Richardson.[3]

For the southern branch of the railway the tender of J. Taylor for £8,036: 5: 0 was accepted on June 26,[4] and a few days later that of E. G. Wright for the Racecourse Hill section at £8,147.[5] Soon after this Taylor, employing about thirty men and using a large team of horses and about six drays, began ballasting at the Whitecliffs terminus where a township had already been

1. Ibid, February 15, 1873.
2. Ibid, March 26, 1873.
3. Journal Proceedings of Provincial Council, May 6, 1873. P.5.
4. N.Z. Gazette 1873, Page 404.
5. Ibid, 1873, Page 419.

laid out. By August 19, a Hororata correspondent wrote that at least 1½ miles of the line were formed and Taylor was planning to shift his camp nearer to Bluff (i.e. Coalgate).[1] There were no difficult engineering problems, and only a small number of creeks and water courses, so that by the end of the year it was reported that nearly all the Malvern Hills end of the line had been completed.[2] The report that sleepers were being carted from Oxford for bridging in the Selwyn Gorge is misleading, since the railway bridge across the Selwyn at Whitecliffs was not built at this time. It may refer to timber required for the Surveyors' Gully crossing or for the Hawkins or Waireka rivers.

The Malvern (Sheffield) section of the line was completed first and dissatisfaction was expressed at the delay in getting the Whitecliffs section finished. On February 5, 1875, the tender of George Holmes for platelaying on the Whitecliffs branch was accepted[3] and with these operations begun the desired end of a railway service to Christchurch was in sight.

When the work was finally completed the South Malvern residents prepared for the celebration of the opening of the line with great pleasure and considerable excitement. A special train left Christchurch at 9.45 a.m. on Nov. 3, 1875, for the journey to Whitecliffs, where the residents had made extensive preparations for its reception.[4] It was a great day for the district. Unfortunately, the weather was unfavourable and the luncheon provided had to be served in the railway carriages, but this

1. "The Press", August 19, 1873.
2. Ibid, December 22, 1873.
3. N.Z. Gazette, 1875, Page 130.
4. "Lyttelton Times", November 4, 1875.

did not spoil the festive atmosphere. After lunch, with an improvement in the weather, an inspection was carried out of the mining works in the district and later speeches were delivered by Sir J. Cracroft Wilson, George Holmes senior, James McIlraith, Hart and Wilson. Holmes said, with some truth, that but for the grumbling and persistency of the district the railroad would never have reached them. The grumbling had lasted only five years, it had carried with it the persistency of the local miners, and it had been energetically led in public by E. J. Wakefield, with the support of many Christchurch residents who wanted cheaper coal. The goal was now reached. Very soon special mid-day trains were running daily during the grain season to load wheat from the rapidly progressing district of Hororata. Malvern Coal from Hart's Pits and Homebush was on its way to Christchurch, but never in the quantities that had been hoped for, or promised.

Scarcely three months after the opening of the railway an accident occurred which the name of a very sharp bend on the Glentunnel-Whitecliffs road still recalls. Early in February, 1876, the 4 p.m. train to Christchurch had left Whitecliffs and had reached a point about two miles below the township, where both the road and the railway wind round a sharp curve. Here the engine and guardsvan left the rails and rolled down the embankment. An inspector of permanent way was thrown clear but was slightly injured, the engine driver escaped unhurt but the fireman was badly injured and was seriously ill for some time.[1] Considerable difficulty was experienced in getting the engine back on the line and the sharp bend has ever since been known to local

1. "The Press", February 9 and 10, 1876.

residents as "Break-Neck Corner".

The Whitecliffs branch line, in this period, frequently formed part of wider railway plans. Ever since the discovery of Browning's Pass on May 8, 1865[1], there had been hopes for a rail line with the West Coast. It does not seem that von Haast had any such plan, since the farthest inland terminus suggested in his report was at the Kowhai.[2] It is certain, however, that the West Coast people were anxious for a railway line as soon as possible -- to get their superior coal to the Canterbury markets and to obtain supplies of foodstuffs for their consumers. A public meeting was held in Hokitika soon after tenders were called for the Whitecliffs line, at which, since it was thought that Canterbury would probably extend the Whitecliffs line to the Acheron, it was suggested that plans should be laid for a West Coast railway which would leave the Whitecliffs line at Homebush station and travel along the Rakaia flats and the Wilberforce to Browning's Pass. The total distance to the Pass on this route was estimated at 68 miles.[3]

In 1878 after a special survey of railways by W. N. Blair, engineer in charge of railways, a report was presented to the House of Representatives which suggested three alternative routes for the Whitecliffs-Rakaia Gorge line.[4] One of these would leave the Whitecliffs line at Coalgate and another at Hawkins, but both would converge at Hororata and follow the same route to the Rakaia Gorge. A third line, from Whitecliffs station up the Wakaepa river, was not favoured since it involved too steep a grade to the

1. Bruce, "Early Days of Canterbury", Page 160.
2. J. von Haast, op.cit., P.146.
3. "The Press", May 26, 1873.
4. Appendix to Journal House of Reps. 1878, Vol.I, Sect.E-1, P.40.

Rakaia gorge area. The line via Coalgate would have been 19½ miles in length, and was estimated to cost £91,000, while that via Hawkins would be 22 miles in length at a cost of £95,000. In preference to any of these routes Blair advocated an inland railway, starting at Oxford and skirting the ranges via Malvern Hills, Ashburton Forks and Geraldine to a junction at Orari. This scheme became known as the Canterbury Interior Railway, but the only section of it to be completed was the Oxford-Sheffield line. In 1880 a large railway commission[1] sounded the death knell of the Canterbury Interior line "which as a whole we altogether condemn". The Whitecliffs-Rakaia Gorge route was still favoured because it would open up the Acheron coal field, and the Wairiri Valley route was considered better than that via Hororata, though the latter would have given advantage to a large number of settlers. None the less, even in the case of this line the commission proposed that it be indefinitely postponed, while the Coalgate-Temuka route, generally called the Canterbury Interior line, was to be abandoned. A route to the West Coast "via Homebush" was still a possibility in 1883 when a further commission was set up to investigate the respective claims of Arthur's Pass and the Teremakau Valley (Hurunui).[2] The former route was eventually chosen, with the Waimakariri Gorge approach, since the latter was sixteen miles shorter than the suggested diversion via Lake Lyndon and Homebush, and though it presented major engineering difficulties, it had the additional advantage of a down gradient for the heavy West Coast traffic. Thus, for a

1. Ibid. 1880. Vol. I, E-3, Report of Commission, P.12 & 13.
2. Ibid, 1883, Vol. II, Sect. D.-2a, Page 9, and Map.

short period, the Whitecliffs line had a vital connection with two schemes of railway development, one to Rakaia Gorge with the possibility of a link with the West Coast, and the other running along the foothills through the heart of Canterbury. The importance of the Whitecliffs line was never held in question till supplies of coal decreased.

"COAL TRACK" ROADS.

While the railway was bringing South Malvern into closer touch with the Canterbury province, roads and bridges were opening up the district itself. Roads were comparatively easy to construct in Canterbury because of the level nature of the plains, over which, in the '70's, metalled roads were rapidly forming a network. However, very little road-making had been done in South Malvern up to 1870. A visitor in that year paid scant respect to the main Selwyn Valley coal road,[1] only parts of which had been metalled at this stage. But in the following year another visitor travelling to Hart's Mine noticed a "new road" in the course of construction on the north bank of the Selwyn river, which he hoped would greatly facilitate the carting of the "black diamonds".[2] Three months later an event occurred which was to mean much more for the opening up of the district. On May 25, 1871, at a special meeting of ratepayers at Homebush the first South Malvern Road Board was elected.[3] The first committee members were all prominent figures in early South Malvern -- M. B. Hart (chairman), James McIlraith, N. Grindrod, I. Pole, Kenneth Wilson and D. Manson. The separate existence

1. "The Press", Dec. 12, 1870.
2. Ibid, February 2, 1871.
3. South Malvern Road Board, minutes, May 27, 1871.

of the South Malvern road district was recognised in the Canterbury Provincial Council on December 11, 1872[1] and its boundaries were constituted in April, 1883.[2] On February 10, 1873, a new board was elected on which McIlraith became chairman and John Gunn replaced Kenneth Wilson.[3] When a grant of £400 was placed at the disposal of the board for the formation of the Selwyn valley coal road[4] extensive plans were made for road construction and metalling. The Provincial Council gave inspiration and material help when it was proposed that immediate steps should be taken to send a surveyor to the Malvern district for the purpose of laying out all necessary roads and reserves.[5] It is interesting that some very good road work was carried out close to the homes of members. Apart from the main coal road, 65 chains were to be metalled "eastwards from Manson's", (down what is now the Coalgate-Greendale road), and 12 chains of the "Bluff road near Manson's," (towards the Selwyn river). Tenders were also called for 70 chains of Pole's Road, now called Bush Gully Road.[6] Where no place names existed roads were named according to the direction which they took from the nearest property owner. The men who drove the shingle drays from the river-bed or from shingle reserves had a strenuous and monotonous task. Among those men who made the roads in South Malvern were John Smith, Kenneth Wilson, W. Reynolds, Thomas Thacker, Ward Robinson, John Dwyer, William Saunders, Alfred Ashton and Fuller. Most of the shingle contracts

1. Journal Proceedings Prov.Cncl., Dec.11, 1872, P.43.
2. N.Z. Gazette, 1883, Vol. I, P.533 and 540.
3. South Malvern Road Board, minutes, February 10, 1873.
4. Journal Proceedings Prov. Cncl. Dec. 11, 1872, P.44.
5. Ibid, June 6, 1873, Page 94.
6. South Malvern Road Board, minutes, April 2, 1873.

were let at about 7/- a chain, and 6d. a chain was paid[1] for breaking the big stones with a heavy hammer. In 1873 there was some evidence of public spirit, when half of Reserve 1288 (at Glentunnel) was set aside for a recreation ground.[2] At the same meeting plans were made for the bridging of Surveyors' Gully creek with heavy totara "stringers". Later, when one of these fell into the deep gully, it is claimed that Hugh Brown, an early settler, carried it up on his back. The contract for the first bridge across the Waianiwaniwa (Waireka) stream was let at £385, with an additional £30 for carting 12 iron-bark piles from Lyttelton.

But there were still no bridges across the Selwyn to Hororata, or to Wairiri Valley (sometimes called Swamp Road), or at Whitecliffs, though cuttings had been made in the banks of the river at Coalgate for drays to cross. At an election meeting at Hororata in Nov. 1874,[3] all three speakers, J. D. Enys, Anson and White, promised that they would do all in their power to ensure that a bridge was built across the Selwyn at Selwyn Bluff (i.e. Coalgate). Enys also promised to get the coal roads improved and a railway station built at Selwyn Bluff. But the residents at Surveyors' Gully and White Cliffs were not to be denied similar advantages. On May 6 a petition was read at a meeting of the South Malvern Road Board asking the board to exert influence with the Provincial Council to have bridges erected across the Selwyn, one opposite Thacker's section and the other

1. Ibid, October 8, 1874.
2. Ibid, May 7, 1873.
3. "The Press", November 20, 1874.

near White Rocks.[1] In the following year £1500 appeared on the estimates of the Provincial Council for a bridge across the Selwyn at Surveyors' Gully,[2] in addition to the one already provided for at Selwyn Bluff. It was about five years, however, before the Surveyors' Gully bridge was built. In April 1875, at a meeting in Hororata for J. Jebson and W. White, both members of the Provincial Council, the latter pointed out that bridges had been sought for Surveyors' Gully and White Cliffs, but that he had urged that the bridge particularly required was at Selwyn Bluff.[3] A few months later this bridge was commenced and a gang of men operating a steam monkey under the direction of an engineer named Stokes carried out the work. As soon as the bridge was completed an application was received from E. J. Wakefield and Roberts, both property holders, for a formed road between the Selwyn bridge and the Bluff railway station.[4] The request received a curt and definite reply. Since the Rakaia ratepayers would receive the greatest advantage from the road let them pay for it!

No traffic bridge connected Surveyors' Gully with Wairiri Valley until 1880. J. D. Enys records in his diary in 1878 that "McIlraith drove me via big swamp to Hall's".[5] The Wairiri Valley was at this time a large swamp, possibly 1000 acres in extent. To reach the valley residents had to be content with the inadequate provision of a cutting into the river until the school was built in 1879. Before the school was officially

1. South Malvern Road Board, minutes, May 6, 1874.
2. Journal of Proceedings of Prov. Council, 1875, Comparative Statement Votes & Expenditure, Session XLI, July 1, 1874 - March 31, 1875.
3. "The Press", April 5, 1875.
4. South Malvern Road Board, minutes, Feb. 2, 1876.
5. J. D. Enys' Diary, March 19, 1878.

opened fears were expressed for the safety of the children from Wairiri Valley who had to cross the Selwyn when it was in flood.[1] Some of the children rode on horseback but the risk was still very great. Possibly because of this the bridge was built at Surveyors' Gully in 1880, about a year after the school had been opened. The South Malvern Road Board paid £350 to the Selwyn County Council as its share in the building expenditure.[2]

Some indication of the great hopes entertained for the future of the district is given in a petition from residents of South Malvern township asking the road board to use influence with the government to accept the dedication of a street to be known as Hector Street, the principal thoroughfare from the Selwyn valley coal road to the South Malvern railway station.[3] If a local resident were asked now where Hector Street was he may discover to his surprise that his cows were grazing on it. Later, in the same spirit, part of Reserve 1388 (the flat terrace area on the left bank of the Selwyn between South Malvern and Surveyors' Gully) was set aside for a recreation ground. This reserve was never developed, no trees were planted on it, it did not have the natural beauty, nor was it ever much used in comparison with the domain at Glentunnel.

In 1875 arrangements were made for the erection of a road board office,[4] a very small wooden building which, in addition to road board business and meetings, was soon used as church, Sunday school, and school in the township of Coalgate. But it was not called Coalgate at this stage, and the site of the

1. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, Jan. 13, 1878.
2. South Malvern Road Board, minutes, April 7, 1880.
3. South Malvern Road Board, minutes, May 3, 1876.
4. Ibid, March 3, 1875.

building was described as "Reserve for gravel, No. 1557, on Selwyn Valley and Christchurch road". Two years later Moses Scott was appointed clerk, at £80 per annum.[1]

The years of the late '70's and early '80's were years of enormous public expenditure throughout New Zealand, when Julius Vogel's loans were used for extensive and ambitious schemes of public works. This spending temper was seen even in a small country district like South Malvern, and for once there was money to spend. Before this time (about 1876) the board had small sums made available to it by the Provincial Secretary. In fact, there was a feeling amongst the members that they had not received the amount of money due in proportion to the land sold in the district, and were consequently restricted in their work.[2] This was all abruptly changed. When the work of the Canterbury Provincial Council ended in 1876 the road boards benefited greatly in the funds handed over to them, and from December, 1876, till October 1877, a total of £8,070: 2: 6 was made available to the South Malvern Road Board[3] -- a tremendous amount in those days for such a small district.

Extensive works including bridge-building, drainage, culverts, road-forming and repairing were now carried out until the mid '80's. Some of these projects reveal how well the members of the board built for the future. Since bricks and earthenware pipes were available in the district both at Ford and Ogden's works in Whitecliffs, and at Homebush works at Surveyors' Gully, nearly

1. Ibid, October 2, 1878.
2. Ibid, April 7, 1875.
3. Ibid, December 1876 - October 1877.

all culverts from the Homebush school to Whitecliffs were built of brick -- solid and enduring monuments to the foresight of the pioneers. Few of them have cost anything in upkeep since then. An early resident, Alex. Beatty, built a number of these culverts, especially the one at Surveyors' Gully. However the road-making was not all so useful or well-planned. As elsewhere in New Zealand, money was wasted on roads that were never afterwards used, as for instance the road up Surveyors' Gully which came out near Ford and Ogden's pottery -- a "back road" through the hills to Whitecliffs. Dean's tramway down from the mine had two gateways over it for many years, but the road was never used for traffic, and the gorse and blackberry have now largely hidden the evidence of wasted money.

In July, 1880, Glentunnel still had no railway station, only a coal siding and a nine-mile peg to mark where the station was to be built. Sir John Hall, of Hororata, and member of Parliament, promised local residents that if a road were constructed the station would be built at once. A petition headed by William J. Barlow and signed by a number of residents was sent to the Road Board and received on Oct. 6, 1880,[1] after which Glentunnel soon had both the necessary road and the railway station. Less than a year later W. J. Barlow's tender for forming the streets of Glentunnel at 9/6 a chain, and making the drains, was accepted.[2]

Another suggested method of opening up the district was by means of a state-housing scheme -- but the houses were to be made of

1. Ibid, October 6, 1880.
2. Ibid, July 6, 1881.

sods.

In 1873 the South Malvern Road Board was asked to place immigrants from the ships "Mary Shephard" and "Punjaub", but the members did not feel able to accommodate them or offer adequate employment.[1] In the following year at the request of the Provincial Council the board was asked to participate in an extensive scheme to provide sod cottages for immigrants with families, but it was considered that the district was not yet in a position to offer them employment.[2] This seems to have been a regrettable decision, since a number of settlers were forced to build sod cottages for themselves, and others lived in fairly primitive conditions.

Another factor, which greatly assisted the farming community in South Malvern, was the cutting of a water-race system. Behind the planning for extensive irrigation was the forceful personality and vigorous campaigning of Colonel Brett, a retired Indian army officer, who had seen the value of irrigation works in India. With this experience and with commendable vision, he was able to appreciate the great possibilities of the wide, dry plains if they had an adequate water supply. At Kirwee, once called Brett's Corner, over a water-race which he himself had planned, there is a fitting memorial to his memory and the work he did for the Canterbury province. Only one of the great water-race systems forms part of this study, that which leaves the Selwyn River below the South Malvern cemetery and flows through Coalgate and some of the farms on the Coalgate-Greendale road towards Greendale itself.

1. Ibid, September 3, 1873.
2. Ibid, August 5, 1874.

Without this race system, sometimes known as "Waireka",[1] the small farms in this area would have been impossible. Colonel Brett's plan was to "provide water between the Malvern Hills and Bealey's Road",[2] and this race, cut by the Selwyn County Council, formed part of a general scheme. It has brought great assistance to the small farms of J. Prestidge, J. Brown and A. Beatty, which could scarcely have been maintained without it.

The smaller local race, which follows the railway line through Whitecliffs and Glentunnel, was cut mainly to supply water for the Coalgate saleyards and was not finished till after 1900.

Such is a record of the development of roads and bridges in the South Malvern district from 1870-80 and of some, at least, of the men who did the work. Many miners were now busy in coal drives and clay pits in the scrub-covered hills. Most of them had settled since 1875 when the railway brought a link with Christchurch, and with the outside world. New roads and bridges made access better and speedier whether to a settler's home, to a coal mine, a pottery works, or a railway station. The old sense of isolation was passing. It is necessary now to consider the buildings erected and the bonds of association forged, through which these newly arrived residents, from widely scattered parts of New Zealand or from the Old Country, became a strong and closely-knit community.

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1. Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, 1903, Vol. III, P.126.
2. "The Press", December 5, 1872.

BLUFF HOTEL, COALGATE, in late '90's, under J. H. POTTON.

Photo by Courtesy S. J. Watson.

CHAPTER IV.

BIRTH OF A COMMUNITY 1870-1885.

Community spirit in an early country district was developed mainly in four centres of social life -- places for entertainment, places for worship, hotels, and recreation grounds. In South Malvern district recreation grounds were set aside in the '70's, at South Malvern, Surveyors' Gully, and Coalgate, the last through the foresight of Kenneth Wilson. Only those at Surveyors' Gully and Coalgate were developed and used, however, and then not much till after 1885. In a district which changed rapidly from pastoral pursuits to a busy mining industry hotels were built early, those at Whitecliffs and Coalgate before 1876 and Glentunnel soon afterwards. The first school was erected at Surveyors' Gully during 1878 and opened in 1879,[1] later a school was commenced at South Malvern, in 1883,[2] and in 1893[3] a side-school at Coalgate. These were used both as churches and public halls till F. E. Smith's hall was erected at Glentunnel. No other public hall was erected till the building of the Glentunnel Public Hall, outside this period. The only church in the district for thirty years was the small Baptist church at South Malvern, built in 1874, which had an eventful and interesting history. In such places where residents met together a community was born.

WHITECLIFFS AND SOUTH MALVERN.

Because of their proximity South Malvern and Whitecliffs may be considered as one township, and such they really are. As soon as Hart's and Hill's drives began working fully and coal was

1. Glentunnel School Committee, Minutes, 1878 & 1879.
2. Annual Report of Education Bd., Canterbury, 1883.
3. Glentunnel School Committee, Minutes, June 5, 1893.

also discovered across the Selwyn River at Steventon Creek and Cordy's, the South Malvern township progressed rapidly. In 1872 W. F. Moore, of Christchurch, spent some time in surveying the streets and laying off the township.[1] A year later, at Clark's auction rooms in Christchurch, sections were offered for sale in the "rising township" of Malvern.[2]

One of the first public buildings in the South Malvern district was the small Baptist church at Whitecliffs, built in 1874. Before this time a small sum had been collected towards the cost of building a church and occasional services had been held in South Malvern by the Revs. W. Pole, J. Hill and J. Sawle.[3] The new church was eventually opened in April, 1874, and a year later, at special anniversary services the Revs. Pole and Sawle preached. On the following Monday evening a banquet was held (more commonly called a "bun-fight") at which speeches were made by the ministers Pole, Hill, Morton and Sawle and by T. W. Adams and R. Pole.[4] Such social functions were held frequently and were an important feature of the early history of the South Malvern church for quite a long time. The abstinence cause quickly found a stronghold in this church and in 1876 the temperance group had the support of a large number of local residents including N. Grindrod (chairman), Davis, Sawle, Brown, Down, Leeming and Fraser. There were at this time 22 houses in the district.[5] In the same year a very interesting report was

1. "The Press", November 5, 1872.
2. Ibid, October 11, 1873.
3. Ibid, January 19, 1874.
4. Ibid, April 22, 1875.
5. Ibid, December 27, 1876.

made by a preacher visiting South Malvern,[1] who had held three services in the district, including one five or six miles away (up the Selwyn Gorge) all of which had been well attended. He reported that there were no other church services in the district, and that he would have visited much more widely, had not his horse been lost for four days. The establishment of churches in early Canterbury was due largely to the pioneer work of such men.

Two years later the South Malvern church was destroyed by a violent nor'-wester. So great was the force of this gale that the church was not merely blown over but was left a total wreck.[2] It was a hard blow to those residents who had helped to build it, since there was no other church in the district. Until a new church could be erected, services were held in Grindrod's house. The new church was finished late in 1879 and opening services were conducted by the Rev. D. Dollamore. Due largely to the good work of N. Grindrod, W. Deeming and J. Ford the church was opened with only a small debt[3].

The first hotel in Whitecliffs, which was owned by Patrick King, suffered a worse fate than the local church. After being closed as a licensed hotel because of "reduction", it was later used as an accommodation house by Thomas Leeming and during that time was gutted by fire. N. Grindrod kept the local store and also, at the back of his home, a small blacksmith's shop. It was the beginning of the best years for the county blacksmith, with horses to be shod and drays and implements to be repaired

1. "Canterbury Evangelist", 1876, organ of Canterbury Baptist Association.
2. Ibid, 1878, Report of N. Grindrod.
3. "The Baptist", 1880.

for miners, farmers and road-workers. Another Whitecliffs storekeeper was Edward Renowden. A very early and well-known settler, William Leeming, left Lancashire, England, about March 1863, and worked for some time after his arrival in New Zealand on the Lyttelton tunnel. He came to the Whitecliffs district very early in the '70's to work in Hart's mine, living with his family in a sod house near the mine workings. Later he became manager of the Whitecliffs mine in some of its most productive years.

With two stores, a church, a hotel and a post office which had been established in 1875,[1] and a regular train service with Christchurch twice daily, there seemed to be a very bright future for the Whitecliffs and South Malvern townships. It seemed that, with the local coal mines and clay pits well established and the commencement of Ford and Ogden's pottery works assured prosperity was promised to a thriving community.

WAIRIRI VALLEY.

Across the Selwyn River from the present township of Glentunnel and stretching towards Glenroy is the Wairiri Valley through which flows a small tributary of the Selwyn. Though strictly outside the bounds of South Malvern district there were several early residents in this valley who had close links with Glentunnel and South Malvern. One such man was Alexander Colville, who may justly be described as the pioneer settler of Wairiri Valley. After his arrival in New Zealand in 1865, Colville spent a short

1. "The Press", September 4, 1875.

time in the Otago gold diggings before he finally settled on 100 acres of land in the valley, which was then a swampy waste[1] covered with flax. With extensive drainage he improved his land and at the same time increased his holding. He took a prominent part in community interests, especially in the work of the Glentunnel School Committee. Another early settler in this valley, who took up residence in 1883, some time after retirement from the Indian army, was Major General Davidson, who built a large brick house and established an extensive sheep run. Actually situated in the Glenroy area but very prominent in the Oddfellows Society at Glentunnel was Thomas Napier. Late in 1878 another settler took up residence in the Wairiri Valley, who was later to live in several different places in the South Malvern district and was to become well-known for cartage and contract work. He was Albert Porter, who with his wife arrived in New Zealand by S.S. "Taranaki". One of the first mattresses in their house was filled with wool gathered from the fences and from manuka scrub. Provisions were carted across the Selwyn in a dray by the South Malvern storeman Grindrod, so that in flood periods the household supplies were completely cut off. Later Porter lived for some years in a sod house on the river terrace at South Malvern, during which time he carted the timber for the South Malvern school and for the Whitecliffs railway bridge.

SURVEYORS' GULLY.

Surveyors' Gully township was also progressing rapidly. The name was not chosen but rather developed, because the only landmark in the area in the late '60's and early '70's was the remains

1. J. D. Enys' Diary, March 19, 1878.

of the surveyors' camp on the flat ground behind the site where the Homebush Brick & Coal Company's stables were later built. This position was probably chosen by the surveyors because of the proximity to running water and for the measure of shelter offered in this gully from the north-west winds.

The first public building erected in Glentunnel was the public schook, built in 1878. Up to this time children from the district either rode to school at Hororata or did not attend school at all. A few stayed in Hororata with friends for the school week. But on 28th July, 1877, a special public meeting[1] was called because South Malvern was to be formed into an educational district. The number of houses in the area, including South Malvern township, Wairiri Valley and Coalgate had now reached 56 and the estimated number of children of school age (5 - 13 years) was 36. Later the same year, on October 1, 1877, the first committee was elected, with James McIlraith as chairman.[2] A special meeting of householders on February 16, 1878, fixed the present site of the school at 'Surveyors' Gully, though a later meeting indicates great opposition to this plan, mainly from residents at Coalgate -- the first sign of rivalry between the two townships, which was later to ripen into ridiculous and unnecessary parochialism. For some weeks after the school building was completed no 'married schoolmaster' had become available, and a strong protest was made by the Committee

1. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, 28 July, 1877.
2. Ibid, October 1, 1877.

against the "waste of the Education Board's money in the school lying idle."[1] The school was eventually opened on March 8, 1879,[2] with C. H. A. T. Opie as master. School hours in the winter months of May to September were from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. and for the rest of the year from 9.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. Built at a cost of £480, the school had only one room at first, but the average daily attendance for 1879 was 54 children.[3] Louisa Bartram was appointed to assist Opie later in the same year. Among the boys Opie had a reputation for iron discipline, severe punishment and a quick temper. A letter from the Education Board regarding "punishing children on the head"[4] is perhaps a sequel to a struggle between the master and one of the senior boys. None the less, according to the reports of visiting inspectors the school flourished and, by the standards then accepted, a very high percentage of children passed their examinations each year. In 1881, for instance, 100% passed in the annual inspector's examination.[5]

It was at this time that the name of the township was changed to Glentunnel. Surveyors' Gully was a reminder of an earlier and primitive period that had now passed. It is difficult to say who recommended the change of name but the idea was certainly suggested by the "tunnel in the glen" -- the tunnel up in the Surveyors' Gully which McIlraith had cut for the Homebush tramway in 1873, and which was abandoned just a few years later than this, in 1884. It is possible that a Scotsman was behind the

1. Ibid, January 13, 1879.
2. Canterbury Education Board, Annual Report, 1879.
3. Ibid, 1879.
4. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, April 3, 1882.
5. Canterbury Education Board, annual report, 1881.

change of name, perhaps McIlraith or Thomas Brown. However, a letter from the Education Board[1] gave notice of the division of the South Malvern educational district into two new districts -- the north-westerly to be called South Malvern and the other, known as Surveyors' Gully, to be re-named Glentunnel.

In 1883 the South Malvern school was opened with an attendance of 34 children. The first chairman was N. Grindrod, and R. P. Pole, later an active member of the local Baptist church, was appointed master.[2] At Glentunnel the school grew rapidly, until in 1885, there was an average daily attendance of 72 children. During these years, in addition to James McIlraith, two other chairmen held office, Kenneth Wilson of Coalgate, and George Craighead. On April 6, 1885, a very stormy meeting[3] was held to discuss the suggestion of a side school at Coalgate. The proposal was rejected with some heat, for several trenchant reasons, the most important of which was that the train travelled daily between Coalgate and Glentunnel at suitable times for children attending school.

Many of the houses familiar to residents in those days no longer exist or at least are in a state of disrepair. On the route between South Malvern and Glentunnel and on the left hand side of the road across the railway was Thomas Thacker's sod house. Thacker owned some of the land up the valley and did a considerable amount of road-making in the South Malvern district. Almost opposite his house, beside the piles of spoil and coal measures now covered with weeds, was the row of box-like cottages

1. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, Jan. 9, 1882.
2. Canterbury Education Board, annual report, 1883.
3. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, April 6, 1885.

for the employees of J. B. Sheath -- hence the name Sheath's Row, which is still used. In Glentunnel township the section on which the Presbyterian church now stands was used as a camping ground for the wool wagons from "Snowdon" sheep station. The first shop in Glentunnel was built by Thomas Lamport for John Troup, a butcher's shop and residence, at one time the only building on the whole block on which it stood. The old shop no longer exists. Up Surveyors' Gully, and in close prosimity to the mine workings, were several sod-cottages, two of which were owned by miners named Nicholl and Thomas. The site of Nicholl's sod hut may still be seen to the left of the old coal tramway and opposite the entrance of the tunnel. William Hitchell,was the first general store-keeper in the township, and was also a member of the local school committee. William J. Barlow who came to Glentunnel in 1875, lived for a time in a tent in Surveyors' Gully. He later took a prominent part in local activities, was a member of the school committee, and was active in domain board affairs and in the work of the Presbyterian church in the district. An indication of the development of the district may be gathered from a report published in 1875 of a political meeting held at Surveyors' Gully[1] at which there were 40-50 people present, including C. McMillan (in the chair), Lewen, Hobbs (manager of the brick works at South Malvern), Williams (post office clerk at Surveyors' Gully) and Grindrod (storekeeper at South Malvern).

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

The school at Glentunnel, as soon as it was completed and

1. "The Press", Dec. 27, 1875.

furnished, became the centre for almost all the social activities in the district. To local residents it became public hall, church, library, gymnasium, and concert hall. A report of the opening of the Kimberley school, in Canterbury, shows that such was the common experience in many isolated country districts, where, the writer points out, "a school becomes a centre" and that from it "gradually a district springs up".[1] As soon as Glentunnel school was opened singing classes were commenced by Thomas Brown,[2] the local mine manager. In the same year application was made by the Coalgate Sports Committee for the use of the school for dancing on Christmas eve. It seems that at this time, though only for a few years, the Boxing Day sports meeting, which later became a very popular annual fixture at the Glentunnel Domain, was held on the flat ground opposite Manson's, where the Coalgate bowling green is now situated. A Christmas Eve ball was part of the annual festivities, a preliminary entertainment before the sports on Boxing Day. Numerous are the stories of great enthusiasm and occasional fights at the sports. Another local social club found a home in the school when the Glentunnel Amateur Dramatic Club began to hold concerts there in September, 1880.[3] When the first local library was formed in the same year the school porch was used for its bookcase. At least one application was made in these years to use the school for a marriage ceremony,[4] but in most cases local weddings took place in the home of the bride's father. The homes of William Lee, of Wairiri Valley and of William Barlow, William Hitchell and

1. Ibid, November 5, 1874.
2. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, Jan. 13, 1878.
3. Ibid, Sept. 6, 1880.
4. Ibid, July 3, 1882.

Harry Nicoll all saw marriages performed at a time when no local church had been built.

A small country township is seldom without its petty rivalries, and Glentunnel in these early days was no exception. A motion put forward by the school committee in 1880,[1] and fortunately lost, provided that "no person from the Hororata area should be allowed to attend a dance in the school." It has been suggested, in defence of the local members, that a serious diphtheria epidemic was taking its toll in Hororata at this time, but it is equally possible that the very limited floor space in the school gave the ready opportunity for an exclusive attitude.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

The Glentunnel school was used for church services by the Presbyterians and Methodists consistently till 1900, and by the Salvation Army for a short period. In the early history of Presbyterianism in Canterbury the Presbyterian Extension Association, whose chairman was Rev. A. F. Douglas of St. Paul's Church, Christchurch, did remarkably energetic and efficient work.[1] In September, 1871, local representatives in James McIlraith, Scott, and Gibson were appointed by this association to extend Presbyterian work in the Hororata district.[2] Just over a year later Rev. R. Ewen, on his appointment to work as an itinerant minister in a parish which extended from the South Selwyn to the Malvern Hills, was asked to arrange monthly services at Hororata, Hawkins, Russell's Flat and Kowai Pass.[3] The first attempt to establish regular Presbyterian services in South Malvern itself

1. L.M. Rogers, "Then and Now", The Pres. Church in Canterbury, 1857-1934, Page 11.
2. "The Press", Sept. 18, 1871.
3. Ibid, Dec. 18, 1872.

was made late in 1877, at a meeting held in the road board office in Sheffield.[1] Among those present were James McIlraith, David McMillan, C. McMillan, H. Gillanders, J. Gunn, W. Wilson, N. McCrostie and W. J. Barlow. As a result of this meeting arrangements were made with the Rev. C. Fraser, of St. Andrews' Christchurch, for the commencement of regular services at Sheffield Glentunnel, Greendale, and Hororata, and enquiries were made regarding a permanent minister. The first Presbyterian service recorded in the South Malvern district was held in the road board office at Coalgate in February, 1878, when Fraser preached in this small building, approximately ten feet wide and fourteen feet long, to a good attendance of people. On December 23, 1878, the Rev. F. M. Hauxwell was ordained to the Malvern charge[2] and held regular services in the road board office till his departure for Papanui. His successor, the Rev. James Maxwell, remained in Malvern for twenty-two years,[3] and it was early in this period that application was made by John Troup and other Glentunnel residents to use the school for religious services and to place a harmonium in the school. After a heated committee meeting, at which the chairman cast his vote in favour of this instrument, permission was granted.[4] From this time services were held regularly in the school until the Presbyterian church was built just before the Great War.

The earliest religious services in the whole district were no doubt those conducted, after the order of the Church of England,

1. Records of W. J. Barlow, Glentunnel.
2. Rogers, op.cit., Page 26.
3. Ibid, Page 26.
4. Glentunnel School Committee, Minutes, March 16, 1883.

at Lady Barker's home at Steventon in the '60's, to which she and her husband invited neighbouring shepherds and stockmen. Anglican services were probably also held at the Malvern Hills station when Archdeacon Harper had charge of the Southern stations parish.[1] In Hororata services were occasionally conducted by visiting clergy, such as those held when Rev. F. Pember visited the township in November, 1872,[2] and when Archdeacon Wilson, of Christchurch, conducted services in October, 1873.[3] When the Hororata church was built in June, 1876, Glentunnel parishioners were included in the Hororata parish, though it was many years before they had a church of their own. There is no record of the Glentunnel school's being used for Church of England services, though it appears that it was so used in the '80's until F. E. Smith built his hall. In this building services were conducted until plans were commenced for the erection of the Glentunnel Anglican church in 1903.

Methodist services were commenced at both Coalgate and Glentunnel in the early '80's by the Rev. H. Collins, of the Wesleyan branch of the church. There is a very early record of a Primitive Methodist service being held in the Selwyn Gorge in 1874,[4] but no details are available. At Coalgate application was made to use the road board office in April, 1881,[5] and after July, 1882,[6] Methodist services were also held in the Glentunnel school, for many years, till an arrangement was made with the

1. Acland, "Early Canterbury Runs," Page 65.
2. "The Press", November 14, 1872.
3. Ibid, October 11, 1873.
4. "Primitive Methodist Messenger", 1874.
5. Sth. Malvern Road Board, Minutes, April 6, 1881.
6. Glentunnel School Committee, Minutes, July 3, 1882.

Baptist church for use of the chapel at Whitecliffs. Another religious body, the Salvation Army, commenced services in the school in 1885,[1] but this cause was short-lived in South Malvern. The Roman Catholic community also used Glentunnel school for their services, but outside this period, commencing after July 1903.[2] A temperance organisation, known as Good Templars, which was very strong at this time throughout Canterbury and had energetic branches in many country districts, conducted activities in the Glentunnel school for several years from 1883.[3]

ODDFELLOWS' LODGE.

Another society destined to play a prominent part in the history of the district was the Oddfellows Lodge. The Independent Order of Oddfellows became established in Sheffield in November, 1876,[4] but it was almost seven years before a branch of the order was formed in South Malvern. On April 24, 1883, the Loyal Coleridge Society, as it was called, was formed at a special inaugural meeting in the Glentunnel school. Among those present were J. Richardson, B. J. Leahy, C. Foster, T. Napier, H. Patterson, A. Dunbar, R. Graham, J. Shields, J. Smith, R. Trevalla, F..E. Smith, J. Aitken and J. Troup,[5] a number of whom, and particularly F. E. Smith, were to become prominent members of the society and were to take a full share in all district activities. The lodge commenced its work with twenty-two members and funds to the value of £18: 9. 0.[6]

1. Ibid, Minutes, Aug. 3, 1885.
2. Ibid, " July 6, 1903.
3. Ibid, February 5, 1883.
4. "The Press", November 22, 1876.
5. Loyal Coleridge Lodge, Jubilee Souvenir Report, 1883-1933, P.4
6. Ibid, Page 2.

Dr. Richards, of Hororata, became the first accident doctor for the society and a member of the well-known McMillan family provided the first name on the merit board of the lodge. Candles and lamps provided meagre lighting for the lodge meetings of those early days. In 1885, after a lengthy discussion in the school committee, permission was granted to the Oddfellows to install a cupboard and a dispensation board in the school.[1] Such were the beginnings of a society which soon became an integral part of community life in South Malvern. So it was also that by 1885 many bodies, social, political and religious had found a common meeting place in the small one-roomed building which was the Glentunnel public school.

COALGATE.

The township of Coalgate virtually began its life with the opening of the Whitecliffs railway line. Until then the place was known generally as Bluff, or Selwyn Bluff, and a few isolated farm dwellings showed the extent of its development. For a short time the railway station was also known as Bluff, but the name was early changed to Coalgate, since the township occupies a central position in the Selwyn Valley in which several mines have been worked and is therefore the gate to the coal.[2] It seems that E. J. Wakefield was largely responsible for the change, because soon after the railway line was opened, in November, 1876, he addressed a memorial, signed by a number of local residents, to the Secretary for Public Works in Christchurch. Among other petitions, the memorialists sought increased train services for the

1. Glentunnel School Committee, Minutes, December 7, 1885.
2. Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, 1903, vol. III, page 748.

grain season (since the Hororata district was rapidly opening up,) a reduction in costs on the transport of coal, the appointment of a permanent railway official at Bluff station, and the alteration of the name from Bluff to Coalgate. The letter received in reply from J. T. Peacock, Secretary of Public Works, parts of which were published in "The Press" on January 29, 1876, stated that a man had been placed in charge of Bluff station, and that no objection would be raised to the change of name, though the General Government would have to be consulted.[1] The official use of the name dates from this time, though it had been used earlier, in November 1875, in advertising at Christchurch the sale of building sections in this "rising township."[2]

In May, 1876, a Hororata correspondent, reported that the railway station was in future to be known as Coalgate,[3] and later in the year the name is used in the South Malvern Road Board records for the first time.[4] It seems fitting that E.J. Wakefield who did much to bring the district before the notice of the Canterbury public, has a permanent memorial in the name of one of its townships.

The Bluff Hotel at Coalgate still bears the name of the township in those days. It was being built, almost at the time that the township's name was changed, by Mark Scott, of Rangiora. After Scott other early owners were Read and later, Walshawe. It seems that, although the hotel was on the main route to Hororata which the grain and wool wagons used, no proprietor held it for

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1. "The Press," January 29, 1876.
2. Ibid, November 19. 1875.
3. Ibid, May 30, 1876.
4. South Malvern Road Board, minutes, October, 1876.

long in the '70's and '80's.

Apart from James McIlraith, David Manson and Kenneth Wilson were the pioneers of Coalgate. The former lived in a sod cottage a short distance below the present Selwyn bridge. A few very old fruit trees and a square of tall blue-gums mark the site of this very early home. About one mile further down the river was the sod home of Kenneth Wilson and family, from which a son and daughter are still living, at Te Pirita. Nothing remains at all of this home, except that a few lonely pine trees, tall but bent by many 'nor-westers, stand sentinel over the site. Wilson was later employed by the Rakaia Road Board and did considerable work in the early water-race construction, more especially in the Waireka, Bluff and Hororata schemes. In the early '70's these two homes and the homestead at Homebush were landmarks of what was later Coalgate, since there were no houses between these two cottages and the Homebush hills, mainly because of the problem of water supply. Another early Coalgate settler was G. Pole, who lived on the Bush Gully road, and who was a member of the first South Malvern Road Board. Others who had established their farms by the early '80's were James Brown, at "Milburn" Coalgate, Alexander Beatty at "Longford," and Ambrose Beatty. Possibly just a little later than these was James Langdale, who became owner of a hill property known as "Kirkless," and who was later one of the trustees for the Coalgate Saleyards Company.

FARMING.

During this period farming in the district underwent a slow but definite change. Up to this time South Malvern farming, like that of most other districts in early Canterbury, had been limited

to pastoral work. It is not true to say that the district changed to agricultural farming, since the lowlying hills and much of the flat country have proved far more suitable for sheep-farming, but it is certain that from the '70's there was an increasing amount of agriculture, especially wheat-growing.

In 1874 only 151 acres of land were under crop, (and this figure included sown grasses),[1] but agricultural work developed slowly, more particularly in Homebush and Coalgate. In 1874 Manson had about 30 acres in crop of various kinds, and there was a much larger area at Homebush, though it had suffered badly through wind.[2] Homebush itself saw considerable change in the 70's from the cattle run of the early period to sheep and agricultural farming. The Homebush stock had a wide reputation, justly deserved, and in 1876 four hundred cattle were offered at the station to Matthew Holmes.[3]

When little, if any, shelter was afforded by belts of trees or fences the crops were frequently menaced at the harvest period by the possibility of a severe north-west wind. Apart from winds heavy floods in the Selwyn river were also a source of danger, both to property and flocks. Such a serious flood occurred in December, 1876,[4] when the Selwyn rose to a very high level and heavy losses in sheep were suffered by local farmers, and also throughout the Selwyn County. At the same time the Hawkins River reached the highest level ever known, washing away several chains

1. Journal Proceedings Provincial Council, Feb. 1874. Return of Agricultural Statistics, Province of Canterbury.
2. "The Press," January 12, 1874.
3. Records of John Deans, Christchurch.
4. "The Press," December 14, 1876.

of public road in the Sheffield area.[1]

There were some setbacks such as these for pioneer farmers but, in spite of these difficulties a considerable number of small farmers had become well established by 1885, especially in sheep-raising, where twenty years before there had been only the three large runs of Homebush, Malvern Hills and Steventon. The sheep returns from the Selwyn county for the year ending May 31, 1885,[2] included the following South Malvern owners:- Alexander Beatty, Coalgate, (340 sheep); Ambrose Beatty, Coalgate, (271); James Brown, Coalgate, (372); Cordy Bros., Steventon, (7,000); John Deans, Homebush, (18,000); P. Doyle, Whitecliffs, (199); A. L. Joseph, Whitecliffs, (595); T. & W. McKie, Glentunnel, (854); Arthur Munson, Glentunnel, (950); George Napier, Glentunnel, (396); William Pickering, Coalgate, (300); Robert Reid, Glentunnel, (603); John Troup, Glentunnel, (188); and William Watson, Coalgate, (250). At the same time Sir John Hall at Hororata had 32,000 sheep on his run.

COAL-MINING.

The farming community was graduallly growing in numbers and increasing in importance. For the rest of the district the mainstay of employment was found in the coal-mines and related work. The coal mines at Wallsend (Sheath's Row) and Homebush both appear in a mining report published in 1879,[3] though there is no mention in this instance of the mines at Hart's, St. Helen's or Brockleigh. It was the beginning of the end for Wallsend, since both the shaft and the descending cage were reported to be in bad order

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1. Ibid, December 15, 1876.
2. Appendix to Journal of House of Reps., 1886, Vol. III, Sect. H-8, p. 37-41.
3. Ibid, 1879, Vol. II, Sect. H-16, pages 15 and 22.

and great difficulty had been found in ventilating the mine satisfactorily. Operations at Wallsend were suspended by 1880,[1] and it is doubtful if the mine was ever worked again, since in 1882 instructions were sent to Alfred Saunders, the mine lessee, to fill in all shafts and bore holes.[2] Up to this time 3,478 tons of coal had been produced.[3] Some time previously a small child had been drowned in a hole near the mine, but the local policeman, Constable Warring, had after investigation, exonerated the mine proprietors from any blame for the accident. In the same report furnace ventilation was recommended for Homebush.[4] It was possibly because of unsatisfactory ventilation that the mining reports of both 1885 and 1886 show a greatly reduced output from Homebush. In 1885 production had dropped by 40%,[5] the estimated decrease, in comparison with earlier years, being 3,526 tons. At the Whitecliffs mine also the yield was reduced by 2,448 tons.[6] In this period both the St. Helen's mines at Whitecliffs were working to some extent. During 1886 St. Helen's No. 1 mine yielded 4,000 tons, most of which was used by the Railway Department, while St. Helen's No. 2, a new and smaller drive near the main mine, had commenced activity with 100 tons.[7] The Hartleigh mine was at this time in the hands of George Hart, of Christchurch, to whom it had been leased by M. B. Hart's trustees. The mine manager was Alexander Fergusson. Brown coal, considered

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1. Ibid, 1880, Vol. II, Sect. H-18, p. 14.
2. " 1882, Vol. II, " H-13, p. 9.
3. " 1882, Vol. II, " H-13, p. 25.
4. " 1882, Vol. II, " H-13, p. 9.
5. " 1885, Vol. I, " C-4, p. 8.
6. " 1886, Vol. I, " C-2, p. 6.
7. Handbook of N.Z. Mines, 1887, Part II, p. 34.

inferior in quality to the earlier coal, which was some of the best ever produced in the Malvern Hills, was now being produced in close proximity to the old "hard glance" drives, at a distance of about two miles from the Whitecliffs railway station. Up to December 31, 1886, the two most important mines in the South Malvern district, Homebush and Hartleigh, had yielded 70,471 tons and 18,716 tons of coal respectively. At Homebush 17 men were employed and at Hartleigh 25.[1] Both mines were far below the estimated production for which von Haast had hoped in 1870.

POTTERIES.

Side by side with coal-mining, and almost entirely dependent on it, was the earthenware industry. A commission on local industries which presented its report in 1880 showed that considerable progress had been made throughout the colony in brick-making and pottery work, but that further development was greatly hampered by the excessive costs of bringing the goods to the city markets. Included in those who submitted evidence to the commission were James Ford, of the brickworks of Ford and Ogden at Whitecliffs, and Thomas Condliffe, who was engaged in terra-cotta manufacture at the same place.[2] Both these men recommended that reduced railway charges be adopted to assist their work. A railway extension was also suggested by Condliffe, most probably to link his pottery works and the Hartleigh coal mine with the Whitecliffs terminus. Another local proprietor who submitted

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1. Appendix to J.H.R. 1886, Vol. I, Sect. 5C-4C, page 17.
2. Ibid, 1880, Vol.II, " H-22, " 81.

evidence was McIlraith,[1] whose letter, dated from Homebush on 28 May, 1880, suggested that a further railway line between Sheffield and Rakaia would speed up the development of the district, as the Whitecliffs branch line had already done five years before. The value and the necessity of such a line was very much open to question and almost at the same time a railway commission had recommended that certain sections of this route should be finally abandoned and that the formation of the Whitecliffs-Rakaia Gorge line should be indefinitely postponed.[2]

WHITECLIFFS BRIDGE.

There is in the district at least one memorial to the demand for a railway link with Rakaia Gorge and to the desire that those coal-mines situated across the Selwyn River should have the benefit of a railway. It is the railway bridge over the Selwyn at Whitecliffs. Early in the '80's the Selwyn County Council took steps to provide for a traffic bridge at Whitecliffs and in May, 1884, David McMillan, for many years a member and an esteemed chairman of the Selwyn County Council, moved that £500 be granted for this purpose, but the motion was postponed.[3] Progress seemed further delayed because the Rakaia Road Board declined to assist in the cost of the bridge[4] and the South Malvern Road Board declared itself unable to do so.[5] On July 29, 1884, after receipt of a letter from Kenneth Wilson, it was

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1. Appendix to J.H.R., 1880, Vol. II, Sect. H-22, page 75.
2. Ibid, 1880, Vol. I. Sect. E-3, " 12-13.
3. Selwyn County Council, Minutes, May 27, 1884.
4. Ibid June 24, 1884.
5. Ibid August 26, 1884.

resolved to take the necessary steps to have the bridge built, but advice from the Minister of Public Works that no funds were available for such construction[1] seemed to hinder the project further. Soon after this, however, the work was commenced by the Railways Department,[2] possibly as the first step in the Whitecliffs-Rakaia Gorge scheme which never came to fulfillment.

RAILWAY & POSTAL SERVICE.

During this period the annual tonnage of outward goods on the Whitecliffs line was slowly increasing. The expanding agricultural farms in Hororata were sending wheat, the back country runs and the local small farmers were loading wool, and the coal-mines and potteries were sending coal and bricks to Christchurch. For the year ending March 31, 1883, 1,057 tons of outward goods left Coalgate, the main officered station on the Whitecliffs line,[3] where J. R. Hart was in charge of the post office and railway station at a salary of £156 per annum.[4] Whitecliffs was also an officered station, with T. B. Harland as station master. Isabella Troup and A. Grindrod had charge of the post offices at Glentunnel and South Malvern respectively.

INCREASING POPULATION.

Such were some of the factors in the growth and development of a small country district. Since the '70's the community had been strengthened by the appearance of a new but youthful and powerful group, the small sheep-farmers. For the rest of the people coal-mines, clay-pits and potteries provided ample work.

1. Ibid, 28th October, 1884.
2. Ibid, 31st March, 1885.
3. Appendix to Journal of House of Reps., 1883, Vol. II, Sect.D-1, P.88.
4. Ibid, 1881, Vol. II, Sect. H-2, P.25.

For all, new roads and bridges and a branch railway gave easy access. As the schools were built they provided centres for corporate social life for people who had previously been isolated from one another. Church fellowships, lodge societies, sports meetings and social clubs all helped to make community ties much closer. A district with a sense of unity and identity was being formed. Behind such growth and providing stimulus for new and awakening life was an increasing population. By 1876 the estimated population of South Malvern was 112, the number of ratepayers was 91, and the number of dwellings was 25.[1] The railway line, which had just been opened, had attracted many new settlers. This increase in population was still maintained for a return of expenditure for road board districts in the year ending 31st March, 1880, estimates the total population of South Malvern at 216.[2]

So rapidly had the district grown in its early years. It remains now to see how this development was maintained and consolidated in the years before the turn of the century.

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1. Ibid, 1876, Vol.II, H-25, Return of Road Boards and Highway Districts, Page 9.
2. Ibid, 1881, Vol.II, Sect. H-1, P.6, Selwyn County Returns.

A SOUTH MALVERN PICNIC AT HOOD'S BUSH, CIRCA 1900, SHOWING DRESS OF THE PERIOD.

Photo by Courtesy of Miss J. Barlow.

CHAPTER V.

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY 1885-1900.

SCHOOLS.

The period of greatest development in South Malvern was before the Great War. Up till 1914 the number of children attending school in the district increased steadily, so much so that in 1893 a side school was established at Coalgate. In 1885 Glentunnel school had an average daily attendance of 72 children, and South Malvern of 38.[1] Ten years later the average attendances were Glentunnel 61 children, Coalgate 28 and South Malvern 42.[2] After the closing of Coalgate school the numbers steadily rose, till in 1914 there were 114 children on the roll at Glentunnel and 41 at South Malvern, which were probably the highest attendances reached in the district.[3]

For twenty years of the early life of Glentunnel school, until he left the district in 1899, C. H. A. T. Opie was headmaster. But in the same period there were many changes among assistant teachers. Pupil teachers were occasionally employed, some of whom had only just finished sixth standard work. One local boy, Harry Nicoll, was appointed pupil teacher in 1886, until such time as he reached fourteen years of age.[4] Assistant teachers in these years included Fanny A. Webb, Jeannie A. Green, and Emily M. Osborn. When the Coalgate school was opened in 1893 Fanny A. Webb became teacher, holding the position throughout the years of this school's separate existence, with the assistance of Mary P. Barlow for several years.[5]

1. Canterbury Education Board Annual Report, 1885.
2. Ibid, 1895.
3. Ibid, 1914.
4. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, April 5, 1886.
5. Canterbury Education Board, Annual report, 1898.

At South Malvern School staff changes included Charlotte E. Brown, who was appointed as assistant in 1889,[1] and three years later J. R. Connor became head-master.[2]

In the late '90's the attendance at South Malvern dropped slightly, with only 16 children attending regularly in 1898.[3]

The Coalgate side school had an interesting, if somewhat brief and difficult history. From the earliest committee meetings there had been, periodically, a demand from Coalgate residents for a local school in addition to that at Glentunnel, two miles distant. As the attendance increased at Glentunnel in the '90's such a demand became more urgent until, in 1892, a petition from Coalgate residents was made to the Glentunnel School Committee.[4] Such an appeal invariably met with a stormy reception, but on this occasion the committee carried a novel motion of compromise that "rather than have the Board of Education go to the expense of erecting another school at Coalgate the Glentunnel School Committee would be willing to have the Glentunnel school rembved to a site half-way between Glentunnel and Coalgate."[5] It was a strange method of meeting the difficulty half-way. A year later, however, the Education Board provided that a school should be established in the road board office at Coalgate.[6]

About June, 1893, the school was commenced, with an average attendance of about 25 children,[7] and it remained open till 1901.

Some very prominent residents filled the office of chairman

1. Ibid, 1889.
2. Ibid, 1893.
3. Ibid, 1898.
4. Glentunnel School Committee, Minutes, June 6, 1892.
5. Ibid, July 29, 1892.
6. Ibid, June 5, 1893.
7. Ibid, Aug. 7, 1893.

in these local school committees.[1] At Glentunnel R. Trevella was elected in 1887 and succeeded in 1889 by W. J. Barlow, who had several separate turns of office. These men were followed by A. Craighead (1892) and T. Lamport (1897). At South Malvern, when R. Roberts replaced N. Grindrod in 1885, a very early Whitecliffs family was represented. Another well-known settler, A. P. Woodcock, who had his home and farm some distance from Whitecliffs up the Selwyn Valley, took office in 1889 and seems to have held the position most of the time till 1901, when R. Leeming was elected. At the Coalgate side school the first chairman was W. Watson who had some years before taken over the property known as "Cordross", which included some of David Manson's old farm near the Selwyn River at Coalgate. When he was followed in 1900 by A. Beatty another early Coalgate family was represented.

The committee men of these early years may have had a narrow conception of the nature of education, and may not have been free from the charge of bigotry or narrow-mindedness, but they gave time and energy to what they felt was a civic duty, in discharging which they were whole-hearted, enthusiastic, and uncompromising. There are many instances of the firm uncompromising vigour with which they performed their work.

In January,1888 a vigorous protest was made to the Education Board concerning a visiting inspector whom the committee considered quite unsatisfactory since he spent two days at Malvern School, (either South Malvern or Sheffield), "a smaller school than

1. Canterbury Education Board, reports, 1885-1900.

Glentunnel", and only one day at the local school. Much of his examination work, they claimed, had been unnecessarily hurried.[1] Up to this time the Library Committee had been permitted to leave a book cupboard in the school porch but this arrangement was abruptly terminated when the school committee made an offer of £2:10: 0 for the cupboard and indicated that if this were not satisfactory the library committee "could remove the cupboard at any time they thought fit."[2] In the selection of new teachers very novel methods were sometimes employed. When two applications were received in 1888 for the position of assistant teacher, Charlotte Brown was chosen by means of picking her name out of a hat.[3] These committee members had known little of educational advantages themselves but they gave generous service both to the schools and to the community at large that others should have the benefits which they themselves had scarcely known.

Just at the turn of the century a change took place in the teaching staff at Glentunnel which deserves more than passing notice. In 1898 C. H. A. T. Opie resigned, after almost twenty years of service to the school. He was succeeded, temporarily at first, and then permanently by Frank Benjamin,[4] who had received early education at Templeton. Since Benjamin came to Glentunnel with a good athletic record he quickly became captain of the local football and cricket clubs, a keen supporter of the cycling club, and secretary of the Glentunnel Sports Committee. Opie, above the claim of any other interest, was a school-teacher

1. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, Jan. 16, 1888.
2. Ibid, August 6, 1888.
3. Ibid, August 20, 1888.
4. Canterbury Education Board, Annual Report, 1899.

first and foremost -- rigorous in discipline and hard-working in habit. Benjamin was an athlete more than a teacher, and is best remembered for achievements on the field of sport. Both these men, however, gave much to the South Malvern district in the early years.

DOMAINS:

In these years, at the Glentunnel domain, the natural facilities were developed and the playing area was used to a much greater extent than ever before. South Malvern domain, unfortunately, scarcely has a history. It remains to this day a bare paddock without beauty or use, except for grazing. Late in the '80's a domain board existed, consisting of E. McMillan (senior), P. King, P. Doyle, and A. P. Woodcock,[1] but these men were under a severe handicap because such a small district could scarcely maintain several domains and Glentunnel had far too many natural advantages.

Coalgate domain fared very little better at first. In 1883 the first Coalgate Domain Board was elected when, under the Public Domains Act, 1881, the powers of government were delegated to Kenneth Wilson, David Manson, Alexander Beatty, James Langdale and George Davidson.[2] Three years later William Watson was appointed on the death of Manson.[3] Apart from ploughing and a limited amount of tree-planting little was done to the Coalgate domain till it was required regularly for tennis and cricket. In a return of revenue from local governing and administrative

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1. Selwyn County Council, Minutes, August 28, 1888.
2. N.Z. Gazette, 1883, Vol. I., p. 169.
3. Selwyn County Council, Minutes, July 26, 1886.

bodies, published in 1891, the financial return from Coalgate domain was £9:18: -, from Glentunnel £27:11: 2, and from South Malvern nil.[1] These figures give quite an accurate indication of the relative value and importance of these three domains to the district as a whole.

With its perfect natural setting for playing fields of all kinds the Glentunnel domain had a great initial advantage. Situated close to the Selwyn River on level and extensive river flat which rises steeply in the old bank of the river to the higher terrace on which the township is situated, the Glentunnel domain resembles a large natural amphitheatre walled in, on one side, by Bluff Hill with the river at its foot and on the other by the old river-bank like a natural grandstand. Only the belts of evergreen and deciduous trees which were later planted were needed to transform the domain from the bare and flax-covered river flat of the '70's into the beautiful public property it has since become. The first domain board was appointed in 1880, with J. S. Turnbull, J. A. McIlraith, T. Brown and S. Price as members.[2] By 1890 G. Weastell had been added,[3] and later C.H.A.T. Opie and J. Langdale.[4] At this time members of the board were nominated through the Selwyn County Council and then approved by the Government. The first records of the domain board date from September 1, 1890, when at a meeting in Glentunnel "correspondence was read regarding planting of trees from Mr. McMillan,"[5] -- no doubt David McMillan, then of Selwyn County

1. Appendix to Journal House of Reps., 1891, Vol. I, Sect. B. 25 p. 5. Return of Revenue from Domain Boards.
2. N.Z. Gazette 1880, Vol. I. Page 300.
3. Ibid 1890, Vol. I. " 740.
4. Selwyn County Council, minutes, 29 July, 1890.
5. Glentunnel Domain Board, Minutes, September 1, 1890.

Council. A few meetings of the board were held in the Glentunnel school, after which a change was made to the public library,[1] a small compact brick building which had recently been erected through the generosity of the Deans family. In the same year the domain was fenced at a cost of £18.[2] Some indication of the extent to which the Glentunnel Sports Committee had progressed and prospered even at this early stage can be seen in an application from this body to erect a large booth in the Domain on Boxing Day, December 26, 1891.[3]

The planting of trees of all kinds, both for beauty and for building purposes, was continued in 1891 and carried out extensively for many years through the assistance of the Christchurch Domains Board,[4] and other similar bodies. An order for trees in 1893 included hickory, bamboo, larch, macrocarpa and nut trees of different kinds.[5] Sleepers and posts were brought from Oxford for the erection of the horse yard near the domain entrance, and for building rustic seats.[6] These were all signs of commendable foresight on the part of early committee members. A proposal for the formation of a trotting course met with general approval and caused widespread interest, and negotiations were made with the Glentunnel Sports Committee for a share in the gate receipts, entrance fees and revenue from the horse yards in order to cover the cost of the course.[7] Early in 1892 £5 was paid to John Brown for "ploughing, levelling, sowing and rolling" the trotting

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1. Glentunnel Domain Board, minutes, September 15, 1890.
2. Ibid September 15, 1890.
3. Ibid September 15, 1890.
4. Ibid March 7, August 8, 1891 and September 1, 1892.
5. Ibid July 1, 1893.
6. Ibid July 4, 1891, Dec. 5, 1891.
7. Ibid December 5, 1891.

course.[1] Some difficulty was experienced in getting financial assistance from the Glentunnel Sports Committee for in December, 1892, the board denied the use of the domain to this body unless the sum of £2 had been paid before the day of the races.[2] The annual sports fixture was a great attraction throughout the district, and in 1897 and 1899[3] admission fees of 1/- for adults and 6d. for horses turned none away and provided considerable revenue.

During 1893 experiments were made in the construction of fish ponds[4] near the river, which were protected by a small, well-constructed concrete dam. The ponds were stocked with perch bought from the Acclimatisation Society. About three years later the ponds were cleaned out, improvements were effected, and a further stock of goldfish was purchased. Soon after this it appears that the ponds fell into disrepair and were abandoned. It was an unfortunate end to an early and promising attempt to add to the natural attractions of the domain which deserved a much better fate.

With the increased popularity of the domain as a centre for sporting and social activities there came the desire for a public hall on the domain site. First mention of this occurs in 1892 when plans and specifications were discussed at a board meeting.[5] From this time, until July of the same year, a number of special meetings were called, some of which were very well attended. The earliest plans suggested a wooden hall, but a brick building was also favoured. In July, however, the

1. Ibid, 5th Feb., 1892.
2. Ibid, 20th Dec., 1892.
3. Ibid, 1st Nov. 1897 & 4th Dec. 1899.
4. Ibid, 3rd Feb. 1893, 19th Aug. & 23rd Sept. 1893.
5. Ibid, 2nd April, 1892.

proposal for the erection of a hall was indefinitely postponed.[1] Looking back this seems to have been an unfortunate and short-sighted decision because Glentunnel never enjoyed the benefit and the facilities of a public hall for almost thirty years, when the first Glentunnel public hall was erected in 1920 with timber milled by J. Marshall, of Hororata, from some of the best trees in the domain.

For many years a matter which concerned the domain board and the school committee vitally, and, to a lesser extent, the Selwyn County Council and the South Malvern Road Board was the encroachment of the Selwyn River on the school property at Glentunnel. The danger existed early, for in 1888 a severe flood washed away the fence at the rear of the school and there was some risk of children falling into the river.[2] Each winter for several years the danger recurred and the following year the South Malvern Road Board wrote of the extent of the damage to the Selwyn County Council, which in turn sent a copy of the letter to the Education Board.[3] Later, the school committee appealed to the domain board for assistance[4] and the domain board to the county council, which was not willing to accept responsibility or incur expense.[5] None of these bodies showed much willingness to spend money for protective works and therefore the encroachment of the Selwyn in Glentunnel remained a thorn in

1. Ibid, 2nd July, 1892.
2. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, 20th Aug., 1888.
3. Selwyn County Council, minutes, 2nd July, 1889.
4. Glentunnel Domain Board, minutes, 2nd April, 1892.
5. Ibid, 1st July, 1893.

local flesh for many years. The danger still existed twenty years later when a deputation consisting of F. E. Smith and H. Rollinson from the domain board, and J. Stuart and A. Weastell from the school committee waited on the Hon. J. Dickie, member of parliament for Selwyn.[1] The most satisfactory attempt to construct protective works was made in 1894 at the direction of the domain board by Patrick Doyle and William Everett,[2] whose work lasted until another serious flood in 1901.

PLANTATIONS.

Not only were many fine country domains, such as Glentunnel, developed at this time, but this period witnessed also the growth of many of the large plantations which now break the grey monotony of the plains into a many-coloured patchwork, and which provide adequate shelter, firewood and milling timber. The planting of trees in the Canterbury province was directed at first by the Provincial Council until 1876, but in 1878 the main responsibility for afforestation was entrusted to a new body -- the Canterbury Plantations Board,[3] which continued its work till 1885, when the care of the province's plantations was handed over to the county councils. Only one separate plantation body exists at present - the Selwyn Plantation Board, established in 1910,[4] with head office at Darfield. In 1884 approximately 89 acres of plantation reserve at Coalgate were sown in pinus insignis, but possibly because of very dry weather this planting was a total failure. Two years later the work was begun again, when 20 acres were

1. Ibid, May 15, 1912.
2. Ibid, September 15, 1894.
3. N.Z. Gazette, 1879, Vol. I, P.249.
4. Selwyn Plantation Board, records of, Darfield.

planted in conifer species including Corsican, Oregon and Austrian pines, spruce, larch and macrocarpa, and the remaining 69 acres were sown in varieties of eucalyptus. The eucalyptus section of the plantation was not successful and has been sparse and straggly ever since, but the majority of the conifer species grew well. In 1945, after this section of the plantation had been severely damaged by one of the worst north-west winds the district has ever experienced, 500,000 feet of milling timber were subsequently obtained from this small reserve.[1] It has been claimed that the first sowing of eucalyptus seeds in 1886 was made by Hugh and James Brown, of Coalgate, but it is difficult to establish this with certainty.

CEMETERY BOARD.

Of another local body, the South Malvern Cemetery Board, which controlled the cemetery at Coalgate, few early records are available. At a meeting of church officers at Hororata, in 1876,[2] Sir John Hall made passing reference to what was possibly the South Malvern cemetery when he suggested that a section of the local church cemetery should be set aside for non-conformists since "the nearest cemetery is eight miles away, and unfenced." It is perhaps not surprising that, at a time when transport was still difficult and the nearest doctor was at Hororata, and when child welfare services were unknown, a large number of those buried at Coalgate in the early '80's were infants. In 1885 cemetery trustees were appointed in James Langdale of Coalgate, and Thomas Brown, of Glentunnel, to replace

1. Selwyn Plantation Boards, records, Darfield.
2. "The Press", May 30, 1876.

E. Smith deceased and M. Scott, who had resigned.[1]

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

Until 1897 the school at Glentunnel was still the most central and suitable building for the social activities of the community. From that year the hall built by F. E. Smith, and known by his name, was also used. Religious work in the district continued quietly and steadily, though the small Baptist church was still the only local church in these years. Anglican parishioners commenced building plans in 1903 when application was made first to the school committee[2] and then to the domain board[3] for a suitable section before the present site was chosen. The Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Churches were erected later still.

The Oddfellows lodge continued to grow in numbers and in importance to the district. On July 12, 1887 F. E. Smith and C. G. Davidson, as representatives of the lodge, opened accounts with the Union Bank of Australia.[4] Two important events for the lodge occurred in the last few years of the century. On January 25, 1898, Henry Rollinson, a prominent local resident, was elected a permanent lodge secretary. Throughout his lengthy association with the fellowship Rollinson made great sacrifices for the progress and welfare of the lodge and gave untiring energy and enthusiasm to the organisation of dances, euchre parties and socials so that the goal of a private lodge hall could finally be reached. "He and F. E. Smith were the founders and makers of the Coleridge lodge" was the just tribute

1. N.Z. Gazette, 1885, Vol. I, P.511.
2. Glentunnel School Committee minutes, Nov. 2, 1903.
3. Glentunnel Domain Board, minutes, Dec. 8, 1903.
4. Loyal Coleridge Lodge, 1883-1933, Jubilee record, P.11.

of W. J. Teale,[1] an equally prominent member of later years. Another important event took place on January 26, 1897, when the place of meeting was changed from the Glentunnel school to the new hall, built by F. E. Smith. The official opening was celebrated with a social hour and lodge meeting,[2] and one resident recalls that great consternation was caused because the lamps were filled with turpentine instead of kerosene.

Throughout these years dances and socials were held regularly in the Glentunnel school. It was a common practice to put candle grease on the school floor in order to make it suitable for dancing, but in 1894 the school committee prohibited this custom by laying down that "there is no grease to be put on the floor. If there is any grease put on the floor there will be 5/- to pay, and there will be no excuse taken from anyone."[3]

About Easter time each year the school children were entertained at a "treat", at which food, games and entertainment were provided. These were very important social functions, at least one of which could boast the services of a local brass band.[4] Support for such a band had been more or less regular since about 1882, when J. S. Wagner applied for the use of Glentunnel school for a district band contest.[5] From such annual functions as the "treat" there developed, no doubt, the idea of a school picnic, and of combined district picnics, which were very efficiently organised and had a wide popularity, in later years.

1. Ibid, Page 18.
2. Ibid, Page 17.
3. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, 1894. June 4.
4. Ibid, April 26, 1908.
5. Ibid, August 2, 1882.

As the Glentunnel domain was developed and improved all athletic and sporting activities found a centre there. In 1897 Thomas Brown proposed that the domain board should subsidise the making of a racing track, provided the public were willing, also, to contribute to the plan.[1] The trotting course had been prepared by John Brown six years earlier.[2]

Throughout South Malvern, there was always keen and enthusiastic interest in the annual race day at Hororata. This enthusiasm can best be measured by a proposal at a Glentunnel School Committee meeting in 1891 that the school be closed for race day. Considerable discussion followed, but the motion, amended to read that the school should be open "if the inspector was present," was eventually defeated.[3]

It is very doubtful if South Malvern district ever again had so many athletic activities as were established by 1900. The Glentunnel Sports Committee which sponsored most of these fixtures was at the prime of a vigorous and colourful history. A running track had been laid down, but in 1897 W. J. Barlow applied to have this shifted nearer to the western end of the domain.[4] Cycling also came into its own in the '90's when application was made for a portion of the domain area near the cricket ground.[5] Both athletics and cycling received new stimulus and inspiration on the arrival, late in 1898, of Frank Benjamin as school teacher, for he sponsored both these sports and assisted in coaching local boys. It has been suggested that

1. Ibid, 11 September, 1897.
2. Ibid February 5, 1892.
3. Glentunnel School Committee, minutes, Jan. 5, 1891.
4. Glentunnel Domain Board, minutes, March 6, 1897.
5. Ibid, March 2, 1897.

the annual sports fixtures were spoilt by "too much beer" but they were an essential feature of Christmas activities for many years when the sporting programme for the year was brought to a grand, gala-like climax with the Boxing Day Sports.

Other local sports bodies which were to outlive the athletic and cycling clubs and make Glentunnel teams well-known throughout Malvern and beyond, were now beginning their history. In 1897 the Glentunnel Football Club was granted permission to play on the domain, though only for a temporary period.[1] It is difficult to say when the club commenced playing, though it could scarcely have been long before this date. So began the long and successful history of a club which for many years was to share the honours with the Sheffield club in the Malvern Rugby Sub-Union's competition. The R. G. Deans Memorial Cup, presented each year to a member of the club for playing ability and sportsmanship, is a tribute to a famous All Black member of the Deans family. Very soon the club became known as Black Diamonds Football Club, since the majority of the players were miners, but it is difficult to discover who first suggested the name. Occasional matches were played against other townships in the late '90's, some as far distant as Oxford, though the Malvern Rugby Sub-Union did not commence till 1907. In 1901, after a deputation from the football club had been received, the Glentunnel Domain Board arranged to plough and level the enclosure for a permanent football field.[2]

A local cricket club, playing on a grass wicket which was

1. Ibid, Aug. 16, 1897.
2. Ibid, Aug. 31, 1901.

probably far from level, appeared just a little before the football club, since the members were granted permission to play on the domain the previous summer.[1] They were to wait many years till a concrete pitch was laid down, in 1910. The tennis club began to use to so-called "hall site" in the domain grounds in 1895.[2] In 1898 application was made for two lawn tennis courts in the present position, both of which were later asphalted.[3] Thus by 1900 local horse owners and riders could train their horses for trotting or racing in Glentunnel domain, cycling and athletic sports were in their hey-day which was soon, and regrettably, to pass, and tennis, cricket and football clubs were struggling under difficult playing conditions towards a brighter future.

COAL MINES: Ever since the manuka-covered hills had revealed their hidden treasure, coal had been the all important factor in the development of South Malvern district. But it was never found in the quantities for which Julius von Haast had hoped, far less in the vast supplies which local coal proprietors had promised. Once the better West Coast coal became available in sufficient quantities, the brown lignite from Malvern Hills never again assumed the importance in the economy of the province of Canterbury which it had done in the '70's. Homebush was easily the most productive of the local mines in this period. About 1890, when approximately ten men were employed,[4] work was hindered by a strike.[5] Some years later, when A. Thompson had replaced T.Brown for a short time as mine manager, the coal tramway was reported

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1. Ibid March 6, 1897.
2. Ibid January 5, 1895.
3. Ibid March 7, 1898.
4. Appendix to J.H.R. 1892, Vol. I, Sect. C-3B p. 20.
5. Ibid 1892, Vol. I, Sect. C-3B, p. 8.

to be in such a bad state that miners could not possibly reach or leave work without wet feet.[1] Up to Dec. 31, 1899, Homebush had produced 126,288 tons of coal, easily the highest return from any Canterbury mine, the next being Springfield colliery with 84,572 tons.[2] An important change took place at Homebush mine about 1901, when Thomas Brown left the position of manager and was succeeded by John Comrie Campbell, a Scotsman from Lanarkshire, who had gained considerable experience in other New Zealand mines.[3] The Whitecliffs colliery, the next most productive mine, where William Leeming was manager, was for several years equal to Homebush in the quantity of coal produced, as, for example, in 1891 when Homebush produced 4,000 tons and Whitecliffs 4,200 tons.[4] An eight foot water wheel at the pit mouth drove the pumping apparatus and the coal, frequently covered with a yellow, sticky clay, was washed under a splash at the foot of the water wheel. In 1901 the mine had been abandoned for some years, after producing a total of 33,051 tons of coal,[5] and Leeming was then working in a new mine at Hartley. Another local coal pit was the Whitecliffs (St. Helen's) mine, where the manager was H. Levick. A good tribute to Levick appears in the 1900 mining report -- "Mr. Levick is a careful man and spares neither time nor trouble to keep things safe."[6] There were several different drives at St. Helen's but this one, where six men were employed, had produced 6,902 tons at the end of 1899 after being worked for

1. Ibid, 1896, Vol. I, Sect. C-3B, Page 8.
2. Ibid, 1901, Vol.II, Sect. C-3A, P.24.
3. Cyclopaedia of N.Z. 1903, Vol. III, P.754.
4. Appendix to J.H.R., 1892, Vol. I, Sect. C-3B, P.20.
5. Ibid, 1901, Vol. II, Sect. C-3A, P.24.
6. Ibid, 1900, Vol. I, Sect. C-3A, P.2.

eleven years.[1]

In the early '90's an abortive mining enterprise, sometimes called South Brockley, was begun in the Wairiri Valley by William Smart, manager, of the old Brockley mine. A very unpromising picture is given in an inspector's report in 1892, which stated: "It is mud and standing water from end to end, and will always be so, in my opinion."[2] Considerable sums of money would have been saved then, and since, if miners had seen a report on Brockley mine in 1896 which bluntly condemned useless mining in that area by which "good money was being foolishly spent in driving one tunnel after another into trap rock."[3] Homebush, quite as much as Brockley and other local mines, has not been saved from costly, ill-advised and unprofitable tunnelling into clay, sandstone and rock for coal which could not be mined in payable quantities and in some cases did not exist at all.

In 1900 a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the coal mining industry and among those who gave evidence was Thomas Brown, of Glentunnel,[4] who showed that in the previous year Homebush had produced over 6,000 tons of coal (one of the best years to this date), most of which was sold in Christchurch, though approximately twenty tons a week were required for the kilns at the Homebush pipe works and all the 'slack' coal was used for steam-heating purposes in drying the pipes and bricks.

During his report Brown referred to two fatal accidents which had occurred in the twenty eight years of his supervision

1. Ibid, 1901, Vol. II, Sect. C-3A, P.24.
2. Ibid, 1892, Vol. I, Sect. C-3B, P.8.
3. Ibid, 1896, Vol. I, Sect. C-3B, P.8.
4. Ibid, 1901, Vol. II, Sect. C-4, P.307.

at Homebush. One of these occurred very early when it is said that a deaf boy was killed by a rake of trucks in the tunnel. The later accident happened about 1893, when a man named McKerchar was killed by a fall of coal. This was, no doubt, a fairly good record in a long and at times fairly difficult period of mining work.

Brown gave evidence, also, of a new and very large seam of coal, situated on Deans' property, which was to prove the most extensive coal-field in the Malvern Hills. The new seam was situated in Bush Gilly, and Brown estimated that it was fourteen feet thick. Though it was only about two miles distant from Homebush, he did not consider that the new coal could be reached in any way from his mine. This Bush Gully coal field was worked extensively for the Deans family till 1921, when it caught fire with considerable loss of equipment. A new drive to the same seam of coal was prospected a number of years later by R. ("Shiny Bob") Smith and Charles Green, and under the latter's direction the mine has been worked with conspicuous success for about sixteen years.

Many changes took place, also, in these years at the pottery works associated with the Homebush mine. In 1886 the manufacture of earthenware drain pipes was commenced[1] and two years later terra cotta works and other branches of pottery. Another change was the appointment in 1892 of Lawrence Lord, late of Lancashire, and for some four years engineer-in-charge at Ford and Ogden's works in Whitecliffs, as manager of the brick and pipe works.[2]

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1. Cyclopaedia of New Zealand 1903, Vol. III, p. 754.
2. Ibid p. 754.

Lord became a member of the local school committee, the domain board, and a prominent member of the Oddfellows Lodge. It has been, perhaps, a tragedy for the progress of the district that of at least three pottery-making enterprises which showed promise in the '80(s, only the Homebush Brick and Coal Company has survived to the present day.

SUPPLY AND TRANSPORT:

Means of transport and supply were greatly developed as roads were constructed and improved. The task of the country storekeepers to supply provisions for farmers and miners was much easier than in earlier days of poor roads and no bridges. John Troup, William Hitchell, James McKie and John Anstiss were some of the early Glentunnel storekeepers. In Whitecliffs, Grindrod and Renowden were the earliest, later Frederick Abrahams established a bakery and John Brown had a meat delivery, while Thomas Birkett owned a general supply store later still. At Coalgate Waters and Beech were the first to own the shop near the railway station which they used as a general supply store and bakery. Most of these shopkeepers delivered goods with a horse and cart. For all demands of travel or light transport the horse had unchallenged supremacy and many small blacksmith's shops were the symbol of his sway. The day was still far off when both the horse and the country blacksmith would pass together into a forgotten world, and at this time South Malvern could boast of at least four "smithies" -- a small one at Whitecliffs, one at Glentunnel, a well-equipped forge at Homebush works, and one at Coalgate, where Benjamin Body had commenced business in 1887. The blacksmith's shops are in silent ruin now, or are used for other

purposes, but in these years the "smithy," where farmers met together, was as much a community centre as were hotels or public schools.

At the same time, however, in heavier transport, a very significant change was taking place. The horse and dray was making way for the traction engine and trailer, especially on the Hororata-Coalgate road. In 1889 the Selwyn County Council discussed plans for planking the Coalgate (Bluff) bridge to allow traction engines to cross.[1] A few months later the bridges at Glentunnel, Waianiwa (Waireka) and Hawkins were similarly strengthened.[2] As the Hororata wheat-growing lands were developed the traction engines were to hold the primacy on the Hororata Road to Coalgate for about thirty years till they were succeeded by the modern and speedy heavy truck.

At this time, also, when passenger trains were running twice daily between Christchurch and the Whitecliffs terminus a regular coach service was established from the rail-head at Glentunnel to Glenroy, Windwhistle and Lake Coleridge. The name of Thomas Birkett, who was storekeeper and undertaker at different times, is associated also with this early transport work.

In 1888 a return of country telephone offices shows that telephone bureaus had now been established at Glentunnel, Whitecliffs and Hororata.[3] Thus a very important means of communication had been established, and remote places which had known long isolation would be reached step by step with passing years.

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1. Selwyn County Council, minutes, 26 March, 1889.
2. Ibid 30 July, 1889.
3. Appendix to J.H.R., 1888, Vol. II, Sect. F-5, p. 2.

SHEEP FARMING:

Sheep farmers on small holdings continued to increase. Newcomers to the district included Walter Black, a Scotsman, who bought part of the old run of Archbishop Harper in 1891, calling it "Bellfield." He was engaged mainly in sheep farming and had over 800 sheep by 1901.[1] In Coalgate Prestidge brothers had a small farm on the Coalgate-Greendale road with 60 sheep in 1891,[2] a total which had been increased to 533 sheep by 1901. Other farmers with fairly large flocks who had been recently established were T. Finlayson (Glentunnel) with 7,454 sheep; J. Langdale (Coalgate) 799 sheep; F. C. Matthews (Whitecliffs) 468 sheep, and J. Grigg (Whitecliffs) 438 sheep, while those with small flocks included J. O. Anstice (Glentunnel), E. W. Everett (Whitecliffs), G. Griffiths (Coalgate), H. Lewick (Whitecliffs), A. Porter (Glentunnel) and D. Yeoman (Homebush). In addition to this many of the early farmers had greatly increased their flocks. The Beatty brothers, at Coalgate, now held over 1,100 sheep; the Cordy family (including Miss Cordy at Coalgate) had almost 10,000 sheep, and the flocks of W. Watson (Coalgate) and P. Doyle (Whitecliffs) had more than doubled. Apart from the Cordy estate, other large sheep runs in or near South Malvern were Homebush, carrying almost 20,000 sheep, Sir John Hall's at Hororate with almost 30,000 and "Waireka" estate, under Cresswell, running 2,800 sheep.[3]

It is not surprising, then, that in the late '90's plans

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1. Ibid 1901, Vol. IV, Sect. H-23, p. 90. Return of sheep farmers in Selwyn County.
2. Ibid 1891, Vol. IV, Sect. H-15a, p. 65. Return as above.
3. Ibid 1901, Vol. IV, Sect. H-23, p. 90. Sheep Returns for Selwyn County to April 30, 1921.

were suggested for a sale yards at Coalgate with sheep-dipping facilities. The first public meeting for this purpose was held in the Road Board office at Coalgate, in 1898, with W. Watson in the chair.[1]

At the first shareholders' meeting on June 15, 1898, Godfrey Hall was elected chairman and trustees were appointed in Wilfred Hall (Hororata), James Langdale (Coalgate) and Jesse Prestidge (Coalgate).[2] In the following month permanent directors were appointed as follows: J. Langdale, W. Watson, G. Hall, M. Davis, D. Osborne, J. Prestidge and I. Maffey. A plan drawn by Prestidge for the construction of the yards was accepted and a tender for building them was accepted from N. Chapman, of Coalgate.[3]

Extensive plans were made for celebrations at the first sale day on Friday, September 30, 1898. The Coalgate goods shed was hired for a luncheon, catering arrangements for which were carried out by J. H. Potton, proprietor of Bluff Hotel from 1896. The inaugural arrangements were completely successful and so well did the saleyards function in the first few years that in 1902 the directors were authorised to pay dividends of 20%.[4]

When the sheep dip was being planned great difficulty was experienced in providing an adequate supply of water. The Glentunnel Domain Board refused to allow a race through the domain, suggesting a capital intake at Sheath's Row, Glentunnel.[5] Even-

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1. Coalgate Saleyards Company, Minutes, 28 May, 1898; 11 June, 1898.
2. Ibid 15 June, 1898.
3. Ibid 9 July, 1898.
4. Ibid 6 September, 1902.
5. Glentunnel Domain Board, 2 April, 1906.

tually a race was cut by the Selwyn County Council from the Selwyn River, above Whitecliffs.[1] The sheep dip was constructed by Walter Prestidge, of Hororata, and proved so successful in early years that in 1906 arrangements were made for dipping 10,000 sheep in the season.

FULFILLMENT:

This record began in the quiet, lonely and leisured days of early Canterbury, when three large runs spread over this sheltered valley, the surrounding hills, and much other territory besides. It ends with each of those runs greatly reduced in size, for the "cockatoo" had won his right to buy land. Numerous small farmers had succeeded by 1900 in building up sturdy flocks. The story continues with the search of Homebush shepherds, the scientific investigations of Julius von Haast and others, and the steady plodding work of prospectors and miners, all of whom assisted, in measure, to uncover the hidden fields of lignite coal to the Canterbury public. By 1900 a number of large and smaller mines, some quite valuable and some unprofitable, had yielded between them approximately 200,000 tons of coal, with the best years for Homebush and the new coal-field at Bush Gully yet ahead. With the discovery of coal the early leisured days were gone. White roads wound up the Selwyn Valley and a railway, bringing speedier and easy transport facilities, travelled through the district's heart. The record began also with busy men hewing fire-clay or red-brick clay in local hillsides to supply at least three pottery works. For two of them, both at Whitecliffs, the story is ended.

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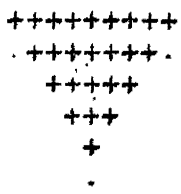
1. Coalgate Saleyards Company, 13 January, 1906.

The hillside scars have been covered by gorse or manuka and few rusting remnants of machinery or sheds remain. Only Homebush pottery works survived till 1900. These material factors -- brown lignite coal and its close neighbour, fire-clay, wool, and later fat sheep and lambs were all-important in the steady development of a small country district which in 1896 numbered 483 inhabitants,[1] four times as many as twenty years before.



1. Appendix to J.H.R., 1896, Vol. III, Sect. H-13A, page 12. Census April, 1896, Selwyn County Ridings.

EPILOGUE.

From the comfortable vantage point of later years it is valuable to look back and take stock of the past. It is abundantly clear that what changed this isolated area of Canterbury from a wilderness of tussock and flax, over which a few shepherds drove their flocks, into a thriving district with three small townships was the discovery of the "black diamonds." For a few years there was intense activity -- a railway, roads and buildings altered the face of the Selwyn Valley. Very quickly, however, it became apparent that coal did not exist in the vast quantities which had been hoped for and expected. Promising workings ended in small unproductive seams, or in stone. At the same time, large quantities of coal were lost because of eagerness to obtain the "easy" coal, or because of unwillingness or inability to spend money on expensive equipment, and in other cases both money and equipment were wasted in unscientific and misdirected mining. Coal had made the district what it was, and the lack of coal put an end to its best years.

Not only was the quantity much less than had been expected but the quality of Malvern Hills coal was such that it could not be a serious competitor on the same market with Australian coal, and more especially with West Coast coal once this became available in large quantities. With the possible exception of Hart's 'altered' coal at its best, none of the local lignite coals could compare with the hard, fast-burning West Coast coal, and this was an important factor in the decline of the district.

The pottery works, dependent on the coal-mines and the nearby clay, had other difficulties in their development. From the first they struggled to survive the crippling effect of high railage costs and transport problems. After a short and important history both Ford and Ogden's works at South Malvern township and Condliffe's smaller enterprise at Whitecliffs succumbed. Only the Homebush pottery at Glentunnel survived. It affords employment for upwards of 20 men to the present day.

The community of people which gathered to work the mines and to open up the district was remarkably closely knit in spite, or rather because, of the difficulties of long distances and poor transport. None the less, a true community spirit for the whole of South Malvern has been hindered from the first by instances of short-sighted and ridiculous township bigotry, whether it concerned the future of a school or of a sports body. Such unnecessary rivalries have at times separated the townships of Glentunnel and Coalgate and have hindered the progress of the district as a whole.

Distance is now no longer a barrier and Christchurch seems nearer than in early years. In transport facilities there have been many changes. For passenger transport modern buses have replaced the train with speedier, more comfortable and more convenient service. On the roads heavy trucks have superseded both the horse and dray and the traction engine. Heavy motor transport has put an end to the service of the horse on the road and the tractor has ended it on the farm. Here, as elsewhere,

a mechanical age has killed the best of man's animal servants and rusting blacksmith's shops are his poor memorial. The local resident with a private car finds Christchurch, as well as other places, readily accessible to him. Not only is Christchurch nearer but so are Britain, America and Australia. The world has been shrinking since the '70's. Newspapers and films helped this process and radio hastened it by bringing the wide world to local firesides.

All these factors have greatly altered the nature of entertainment in a district such as South Malvern. In earlier years, whether in the local school or the public domain, entertainment was essentially "native" to the district. There were local bands, dramatic clubs, concert parties, singing classes and many other interests. Entertainment has ceased to be "local," in that sense, Dances and annual balls have survived, perhaps as well supported as ever, but other local entertainments including the Annual "treats" and picnics have died because of lack of interest or enthusiasm. It is equally certain that entertainment which delighted the residents of the '70's and '80's would bore those of to-day. At the same time, it may be claimed that entertainment is now much more artificial, for the radio voice has replaced that of the local artist, and city players in the dance-hall and recorded music in the home, have taken the place of the local band of years ago. Not only so, but since entertainment is dependent largely on the radio and the cinema, it has ceased, in measure at least, to serve the community as a whole, as it certainly did in

the past, and has become to a great extent, self-centred.

On the playing fields there are fewer interests than in the best years before 1900 and immediately before the Great War. The 'Black Diamonds' Football Club has had a long and conspicuously successful history, and cricket and tennis have been more or less well supported through the years. To these very recently another attraction has been added in a local bowling green. Racing, both at Christchurch and Hororata, numbers many local residents among its enthusiastic patrons. But the old cycling and athletic clubs have lapsed. So, too, has the annual Boxing Day sports' meeting at Glentunnel domain, so great a feature of early South Malvern history. These changes are no doubt due partly to the departure or death of those who directed these sports and gave energetic support at their inception. In recent years some efforts have been made to revive cycling fixtures, but without any enthusiastic or long-lived response. The lapse of such activities is to be regretted as a serious loss, for they meant much to the South Malvern district and to the Glentunnel domain in particular.

In two world wars many local men have gone overseas to serve in the armed forces and have borne witness to the proud loyalty and warm patriotism of this small district. These soldiers have been devotedly served by Red Cross organisations and ladies' committees with food parcels and clothing. The stone pillars and iron gates of the South Malvern cemetery are a fitting tribute to those of the district's sons who have given their lives in these two conflicts.

The progress of a community -- local or national -- towards an eventual and indefinable goal may be calculated as much by its spiritual as its material qualities. By this evaluation religion plays a far less important or significant part in the life of the district to-day than it did for the pioneers and the succeeding generation. There may be many reasons for this. One is, no doubt, a reaction against hard and intolerant forms of Victorian religion. Two world wars have also brought their full share of disillusionment and confusion of thought. Again, though a country district may reflect but slightly the scientific thought of modern times it does show the rapid development of a materialist and secular attitude to life in which the church is no longer considered relevant, or necessary. The prevailing attitude is that of tolerant indifference, but the local church has ceased to be a focal point in community life. This may mean that in a religious sense the district has lost ground and therefore, perhaps, may be building on less secure and less enduring foundations for future years than were laid in the pioneer days.

So long as coal and clay are available in the surrounding hills there should be some future for the district -- not perhaps a promising future, or one in which there will be much progress or advance, for even at the well-planned mining enterprises at Klondyke mine (Homebush) and Steventon (Whitecliffs) unlimited supplies of coal can scarcely be expected. But as long as coal is dug from local mines there will be some tangible reminder of the intensely interesting, busy and colourful years which followed immediately after the discovery of "black diamonds" in South Malvern.

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